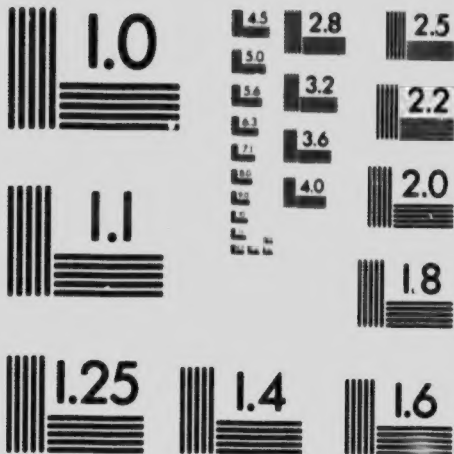


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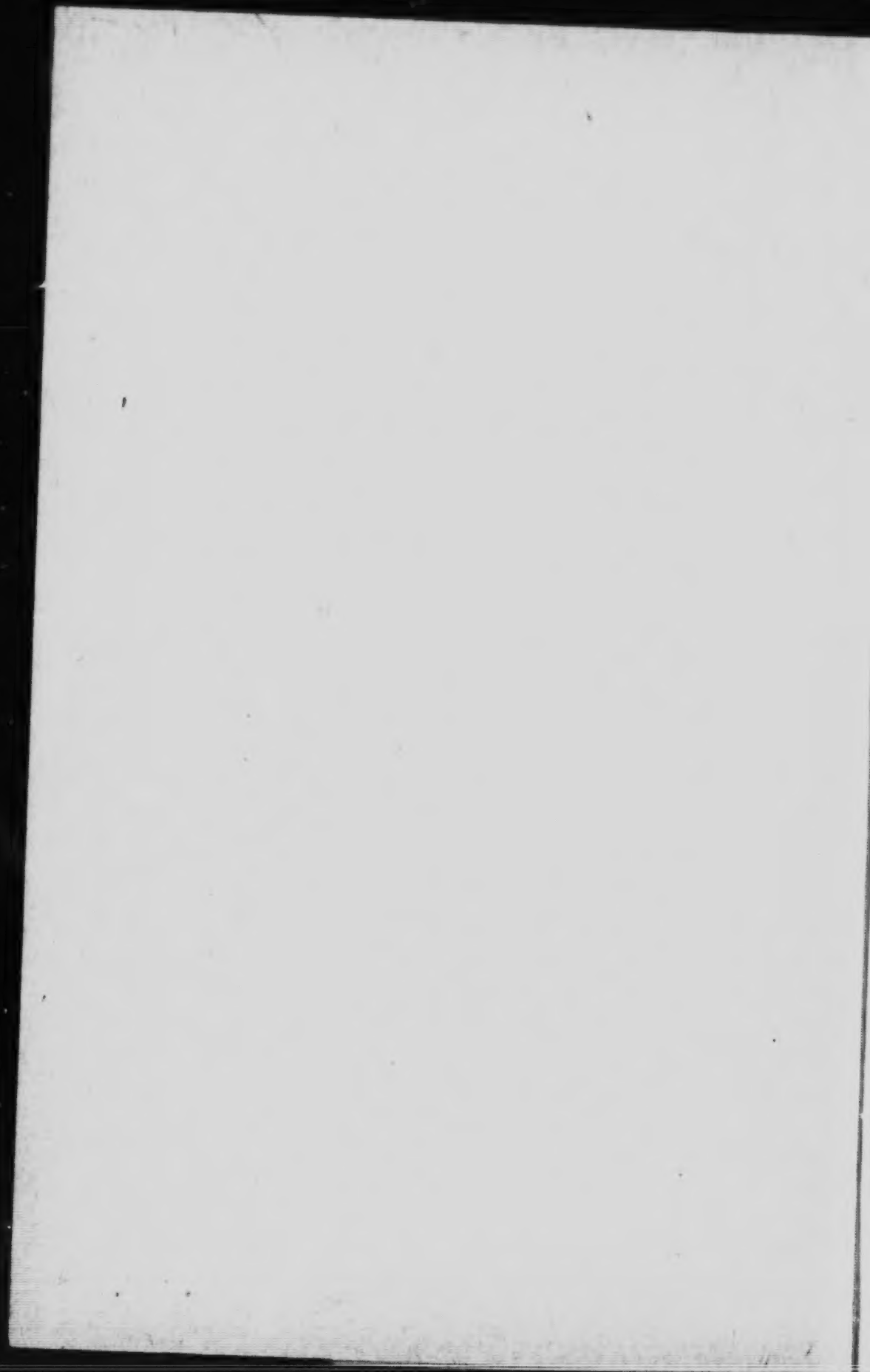


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PICARDY FIELD AND WESTERN VERSE

BY
ALANSON L. BUCK

Author

OUTLAW AND OTHER POEMS
CANADIAN SHORT STORIES



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ALANSON L. BUCK

No. 105023, Pte. A. L. Buck, enlisted 68th Btn. at Regina, Oct. 25, 1915. Discharged Infantry Medically Unfit, March 22nd, 1916, and Re-attested 11th Field Ambulance March 23rd, 1916. Reached England, then France in August, 1916. Service was performed both in the Ypres Salient, Belgium, and the Somme Front, France. Contracted trench fever on the Somme and was sent back to Hospital in England at Southend-on-Sea. Invalided to Canada and Discharged Sept. 12th, 1918. Category "E", Pensionable Disability No. 18.



Sincerely Yours
Alanson C. Buck

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PICARDY FIELD
AND
WESTERN VERSE



A PURPOSE

I'm rugged from the stormy school,
It's little I have of learning;
But God! I've learned some simple things
In practical hard turning.

My verse is rough, my life is vague,
But still soul-free I'm playing;
I'll war with every social blare
In striving and hoar flaying.

I have no rich, no soothing graft
To bear me on to glory;
Hard from an adverse, chilling shaft
Do I espouse my story.

A PURPOSE

The trail with pebbles cavils hard,
Thank God! a light's still flaring;
Call me an empty seamless one—
Still filtered truths I'm blaring.

I'll stake my views and there abide,
Be they so sweet or sour;
I'll drop all self in acridness
For just the pleasant hour—

One pungent hour just to see
That I did not mis-carry
The life below ordained to me,
And purposes to harry.

FAIR CANADA

Liberty Loyalty Industry

Fair Canada, fair Canada! thy people flourish free,
They knit a nation out of three that warring used
to be;

And then from land on every hand came all tongues
to our coast,

Then to the land of Liberty, let's give our cheery
toast!

So from our inmost heart with voice to make the
welkin ring,

Sweet land of Liberty, to thee, fair Canada, we
sing!

Fair Canada, fair Canada! ye are well ruled we
sing!

Ye love your fealty unto old Britain and her king;
Look and behold your statesmen hold, all busy at
their post,

Then to the land of Loyalty, let's give our cheery
toast!

So from our inmost heart with voice to make the
welkin ring,

Dear land of Liberty, to thee, fair Canada we sing!

FAIR CANADA

Fair Canada, fair Canada! thy commerce brightens
far!

The great fire pine, the hidden mine, thy coming
promise are;

Thy lands are still as good to till for fruit and
grain as most,

Then to the land of Industry, let's give our cheery
toast!

So from our inmost heart with voice to make the
welkin ring,

Blest land of Industry, to thee, fair Canada, we
sing!

FAIR CANADA

Music by A. M. Bock



PICARDY FIELD

Really safe home from the odious war,
With a badge labelled front on my breast,
Away from the blood, devastation and mud,
To the old prairie home in the West.

To the mighty grain fields, the blue sky, the lakes
Where the wild goose, the mallard doth nest:
Then I strangely grow sad as I think of a lad
Who never will join us out West.

For he lies far away in a Picardy field,
He died with the noblest and best;
And the daisy still keeps rare watch where he
sleeps,
And the poppy makes charming his rest.

In his ground-sheet he lies in a shell-blasted hole
But his memory will ever be blest;
For in some loving heart strange emotion will start,
Keep freshened the plot of his rest.

SONG OF THE STANDARD BEARER

The standard flaps,
I only know
It must not come to harm;
My own mishaps
Are nothing though
When it is in alarm.

It is more rare
To me than life,
All danger I must quell,
My life to dare
In surging strife
To keep it safe and well.

Should it be gone
And I be left,
My honor shall decline,
Unless is drawn
A gory cleft
To show I offered mine.

UNITED CANADA

United people from all Nations sprung,
Sweet be thy name in brilliant home and hall;
Let it be sung in the cold frozen North,
Where loyal kinsmen answer to they call.

Strong is the love of home and country born,
Choice are the blessings on thy verdant shore,
Let Britain be extolled for her pure aims;
And our great King, O God for evermore.

And to our Allies grant a kind repose,
A speedy triumph o'er the wanton Hun;
Blast all sedition of malicious foes,
Increase our progress in the Setting Sun.

AFFINITY CANADA TO BRITAIN

She begged us not for our children, we pledged her
our splendid sons;

She asked us not for our weapons, we sent her our
fiery guns,

She hinted not at donations, we knew where the
door-way stood,

And the pantry need not be empty while the
daughter has the food.

The need of the mother's table doth open the kin
dred heart,

Defence of the mother's honor teacheth the child
its part:

The mother's friends and her Allies are cherished
gay and bold,

And whose but the household prowess may help
safe-guard the fold.

For we of the maple breeding, born thewed with
a strong uplift,

Are come with our mighty products to tender the
mother the gift;

Ours is the lofty vision when the summons comes
to go,

In the great love that binds us to match e'en the
Hunnish foe.

OUR BOYS

The summons has come! the boys they are gone—
They are now at the front in this war of mankind;

As the grinding wheel turns, our memory burns
Of the fine fellows all, and their loved ones behind;

Say, what will you do when the hat is passed round?—

You can help with your dollars with a stout will—

For that is the way you may back those who pay
Those arguments pointed to mad Kaiser Bill,
(Passing the judgment on mad Kaiser Bill).

Those days down at Ypres, gassed, wounded and wrought;

Those weeks strong at Vimy Ridge proving our word:

Are you not proud that Festubert was fought?

Does the story of Passchendale make your heart stirred?

Then what will you do when the hat is passed round?

The dollars will maxim as nothing else will;

'Twill help our brave boys mid gas, shrapnel, noise,
Argue the question with mad Kaiser Bill,
(Fight all the legions of mad Kaiser Bill).

OUR BOYS

Ah! days in the trenches, gutted and spurned
With death's phantom grinning and clutching
aghast,

But the boys they won't mind if you're thoughtful
and kind

In filling the pantry shelves while the war last;
For this is a holy war smoking to God,

Treaties and oaths must be kept with a will;
While these truths plain, they burn on his brain,
Just fill up the hat till they educate Bill!
(Putting the kibosh on mad Kaiser Bill!)

The summons has come! the boys they are gone—
They are now at the front in this war of man-
kind;

As the grinding wheel turns, our memory burns
Of the fine fellows all, and their loved ones
behind;

Then fill up the hat to its furthestmost brim,
Back up the boys with a hearty good will,

'Till the Teuton war drum forever is dumb,
Crushed with the Kultur of mad Kaiser Bill!
(When the blue mould is o'er him, a groan for
old Bill!)

THE OLD SCHOOL BELL

Ding, ding, dong! over the wavey trees
Is wafted by on the morning breeze
The warning toll of the old school bell;
Plodding along with their ears afloat,
Ready to catch just the faintest note
Of bird, bee or squirrel, whose accents tell
Of a futile chase, a scramble, fall,
Of secret store in some stump or wall,
Hurry the children, knowing the fate
Of the boys and girls who come in late.

Ding, ding, dong! comes in the mid-day glow
Over the lake with its rough white flow
The hurry call of the old school bell;
Fresh from their lunch and a game of ball,
A chase through tangles of bushes tall,
Or a swim where cooling waters swell,
The boys are rushed to the old log school
With its axe-hewn walls, its shadows cool,
To the books and slates and black-boards large
And the anxious pedagogue in charge.



THE OLD SCHOOL BELL.
"With its Axe-hewn Walls"

THE OLD SCHOOL BELL.

Ding, ding, dong! comes in the evening still
Down past the logs and the old saw-mill
The welcome toll of the old school bell;
Away go the boys (for now they're free!)
In a good old-fashioned noisy glee,
In a wholesome joy but youth can tell;
The girls sedately linger behind
Ushered by wisdom to them assigned—
More gentle far than the boy's rough ways,
Who love the pranks of the old school days.

Ding, ding, dong! What doth it's message teach?
A rustic seat of learning, simple and free to each,
This urgent toll of the old school bell;
We go from it to the world's last lure;
A call in life and a purpose sure;
Each rush to a paradise or hell
Till many miles of a trail arise
Between each strayed and his natal skies,
Till the lust of purposes most quell
The haunting toll of the old school bell.

Ding, ding, dong! Then when we're older grown
Will come to our minds the same old tone,
The phantom toll of the old school bell;

THE OLD SCHOOL BELL

We'll toss in dreams as it's errant toll
Throws o'er the land a pleasing roll
In the cheerful tone we knew so well,
To work or play in the dim old school
With its axe-hewn walls, its shadows cool,
To the same old books and blackboards large,
And the rampant pedagogue in charge;
But rouse in time to miss the fate
Of the truant ones who come in late!

EVENING ON LAKE MINDEMOYA

Oh! placid lake!

The darkness gathers o'er thee;
Thy sombre shores are dim
In verdant state before thee;
Yon isle, I wis, thy waters kiss,
But does not deign to bore thee.

The wild duck's call
Fades absently across thee;
I hear beyond the bay
A tinkling bell engross thee;
The milk-maid shy her lullaby
Flings o'er the lake to sauce thee.

The farmer lad
Now quits his work about thee;
Dry herds barter thy shade,
They cannot do without thee;
The boys at play within the bay
Plunge in the flood and flout thee.

The mill at ease
Has steamed all day beside thee;
Yon cave is cool and deep,
But years ago denied thee;
The ancient crane saw Autumns wane
When dusky red-men tried thee.

EVENING ON LAKE MINDEMOYA

Bid darkness wait,
The sun but longer please thee;
His great orb glows amain
For further West he flees thee;
Did he the morn that thou wert born
Thy infant cry appease thee?

Had I but seen
The spangled clouds around thee
In starry solitude
Obscure the cords that bound thee—
What crystal sight! how wond'rous bright!
The morn creation found thee!

What melody!
What heightened joy to know thee;
As thou are now,
The past is hid far, far below thee;
Still traces bide within the tide
Stamped in the rock to show thee.

Yes, on thy banks,
But higher up I trace thee;
The hand that rules on high
Can prosper or deface thee;
But sanctity will come to thee—
He will not all erase thee.



*BATHING SCENE, LAKE MINDEMOYA
Manitoulin Island, Ontario*

B

I

I

EVENING ON LAKE MINDEMOYA

What trackless sand!

Foot-prints cannot destroy thee,
For when the vile has passed
Sadness and shame annoy thee,
And forth thy wash her stamp to squash
Floats shoreward to convoy thee.

Still night comes on

The distant shores now fade thee,
But the outstretching sight
Continues to invade thee,
Slow as the snipe in dusty white
On the hard rocks that stayed thee.

A slight wind stirs,

The elfin stars bedeck thee;
A wondrous rustling moves
From points that scarcely check thee;
Dark fishes leap from out the deep
And almost seem to wreck thee.

The Pleiades

Still weave a spot to hide thee;
We see with moistened eye
Her shadowy place inside thee;
The Dipper hold her journeys hold
For her beams too have tried thee.

EVENING ON LAKE MINDEMOYA

The darting flies
Sport infant gems to light thee;
Home-fires about thee shine
Conspiring to benight thee;
While Peace looks on from dark to dawn,
Showers down bliss to right thee.

I look beyond
The present that enfolds thee,
And know assured, somewhere
A master hand upholds thee;
Or eise from where those blushes rare
When sensual stare beholds thee?

The moon I see;
It saw long years above thee;
It seems so clear tonight,
Clear as the hearts that love thee;
What was the night her dimméd sight
The first enchantment wove thee?

Rest, happy lake!
Till greater truth shall weave thee
A scroll in regions blest,
And there enchanted leave thee;
Not silly dreams about thee seems,
Nor tyrant hands to grieve thee.

EVENING ON LAKE MINDEMOYA

The nightly rest
Now hallows, being by thee;
The stillness of the deep
Does not attempt to fly thee:
Roll on, oh, lake! the morrow's wake
Will show a new phase nigh thee!

AUTUMN AT CAVEMOUNT

O beamy, golden Autumn!
Balmy, refreshing Autumn!
Hot Summer flies before thy fervent sway;
We're glad for thy careering
The life of Nature cheering,
Then, quickly passing, veering;
And none may stay.

The hardy sugar maple,
The sweet old sugar maple,
Crimsons his outline at thy soothing voice;
The sturdy oak is bending,
His spilling leaves defending,
Yet always drooping, blending!
While we rejoice.

And silvery are the willows,
The small thick-matted willows,
That strew their robes upon the garden lawn;
One moment clustered, clinging,
Then spreading, sprinkling, springing
To match the woodland ringing;
And then are gone.

AUTUMN AT CAVEMOUNT

The woods are wild with revels,
Artistic kind of revels,
To welcome this most vestal time of year;
But soon the Winter's chilling,
The Autumn's charms are milling,
And whether we are willing—
The snow is here.

Along the rocky uplands,
The brown old drowsy uplands,
That frown above fair Mindemoya lake—
We hear no more the clatter
Of birds in busy chatter,
They too must gather, patter,
And then forsake.

Then, sweet consoling Autumn!
Most rare, delusive Autumn!
Pillar the rays of Manitoulin air;
Life's fantasies are sweeping,
And not all easy reaping,
And while some guard we're keeping,
Turn to thee fair.

THE OLD BELL-MARE

Dar'st saddle the old gray leader, the mare at the
head of the herd?

'Tis easy to set her nerves pitching when her al-
lies be stormed and stirred;

Her age sets light in her teeth-cups; unsaddled, un-
bitted, unspurred!

For watchful, unflinching and heedful, she hath
the nerve and the fire,

And many of doubtful valor doth harry them into
the mire;

The Teuton, the Hun and the Crescent, doth judge
of her dreadful ire.

(Ah! she scouts on the hollow borders with sin-
ews that never tire!)

Harness-marked are the mighty sinews and steeled
to the herd's long shift;

She is farrow with fevered weanings, but teacheth
her kindred thrift;

And she bucks with the lightest filly that curvets
her trail adrift.

Her meadow's the highway of commerce where
anger and hatred run;

Her guards are the Dreadnought Stallions that
squeal in the hungry gun;

And in the corrals of her Empire she exhibits the
trophies won.

(That great broad throbbing Empire with never a
setting sun!)

THE OLD BELL-MARE

Likewise the reeking trenches gripped strong in
death's embrace,
Where she girdles with steel-thrust hoof-prints the
citadel of her race;
She watches with lofty vigils with her Allies face
to face.

Her birthright is not all they spy for, her thresh-
ings not all they seek,
And they who would snatch from her border must
first discover it weak,
For she driveth with hostile anger unless they be
strong to speak.

Wise she is as the oldest she is firm as the last
golden flare;
To those that would shadow her borders—for
safety's sake have a care,
The fillies grown rounded with prowess are taught
of the old bell-mare.

Fires that canker and smoulder oft break into
flame at her zeal,
For she breathes with a growing tumult should
her ambushed pilots wheel—
Then the shriek of high explosive, how the stall-
fed stallions squeal!

To the world-ends go her offspring and never a
one has knelt,
Ordained they are to the conquest, scar-bruised
with many a welt,
For the foals of the staunch gray leader shall see
that their breeding's felt.

THE OLD BELL-MARE

Progress and granaries bulging, follow their fur-
rows their seed,
In doughty lands of their choosing the picked of
her bands may breed,
And these with the breath of their mother dare
lower their manes and feed.

But the guards of the ranch-house corrals must
challenge against surprise,
And who hath construed their communing by
forging them into lies,
To compass the mares with the geldings wherever
the tense herd flies.

There be spies that mix in the corrals or hunt in
the strongholds riven,
Or sloth in the under-currents or connive with the
craft of heaven,
To ravage the luscious pastures when the herd be
tossed and driven.

To snare on the lonely ridges, to grizzle the marks
of the brand,
Or rope of the tugging fillies the very choice of the
band;
Then these with the stern gray leader must make
their fight as they stand.

With signals and snort at danger should assault
with a fulness set,
So crabbed with wrestled forays, famine, battle
and trench-grimed fret,
Thus the old bell-mare of the ranges must watch
out the seasons yet.
(Try fanning or scratching the leader to see if her
sun has set!)

TO R. K.
ON CORRALS AND TRAILS OF EMPIRE

(Written previous to the entry of U.S.A. into the war.)

I was born in a Daughter's tepee of the Lady of
the Snows,
And I guess that I know her language as only the
native knows;
And I'm sure I've enjoyed your verses as far as
your wisdom goes.

You are one of the bell-mare's cowboys, your seat
is her bent corral;
Can'st thou tell if the old dame hearkens should
one of her offspring squall?
Dost think she would lash with frenzy should it
wince in the training stall?

Wilt thou look if her eyes are blazing to witness
them take the brand?
For this is the process of knowledge that they may
know how to stand,
To show the clear marks of the method be it by
sea or by land.

ON CORRALES AND TRAILS OF EMPIRE

Do you judge she loveth the erring, the first of
her mother-yearn?

Her lusty, high-born princeling who was first at
her shoulder to learn,

And when to control his harem to a bevy of brides
did burn?

Say'st thou that the starry bevy thus taught in a
passioned fray,

Thinks less of the fruitful mother as she cradles
her life away,

Or high from her rock *imposing* looks down on
the trail-heads of day?

For she knoweth the moons and the seasons in
kindness when to wean,

For one of the over-suckled is dotish and sluggish
and lean,

Unfit in the herd's broad *round-ups* to dash where
the lithest careen.

Or which of the prim, budding fillies doth best
attest to her breed,

To trot by her favored shoulder or with her picked
squadrons to speed,

Or squeal with the warning challenge ere their
manes are lowered to feed?

ON CORRALS AND TRAILS OF EMPIRE

Doth she think that they all are worthy to bear
her an honored name,

Whether by Pole or in Tropics, that none may bawl
to her shame,

Whether for gain or for conquest, defence or for
savory fame?

Doth she think them equally doughty to breathe
in the mother lap,

When the lords of the earth with invective,
threaten the band with mishap,

And the dame to her pregnant daughters no longer
may lip the pap?

Or which of the social fillies doth love their stern
mother most,

As they scout in the troubled season on the spy-
bound miles of coast,

Where the bonds of filial duties are neighed as a
daily toast?

Methinks in the froth of danger, should the jealous
bombard her roof,

And the birds and the beasts together descend to
claw hoof from hoof,

Not one of her nervous fillies will nicker or scurry
aloof.

ON CORRALS AND TRAILS OF EMPIRE

Yes! then shall the blood of their shedding revigor
the corrals of earth,
When the brands of Empire threaten to fray from
her harnessed girth—
The blood of their mighty shedding shall bind
them anew as at birth!

DID YOU EVER KNOW

Did you ever know the aching hurt, the bruise that
will not heal;

To stand at grips with a potent force that you may
not reveal;

When it queers your life of most that's sweet and
your reeling brain-nerves swim?

It pierces when you're least aware and your heart
in pain is grim.

It haunts you when you seek it least and it smarts
most in the calm,

You try to ease it off a bit or to cure its teasing
qualm;

It filters in when you feel most gay, your heart-
shelves are laid bare,

You often feel in the blithiest times that thrust—
you know you care!

Invisible to the themes of fact it is not heard nor
seen,

Most every life must have its wraith, its ghost-on-
the-background screen;

You've cast it off and thought 'twas gone and loud
in health you laugh,

Till in some daily course engaged—a slap as of
blow from staff.

DID YOU EVER KNOW

There is no truce with this stinging foe that makes
no outward welt,

For the frozen death-mask mute and stern emits
no torments felt;

No welt'ring blood breaks rudely out and the
symptoms do not shine,

And none may guess that agony in your gnawing
heart and mine.

And yet perhaps 'tis but a sprig, some nick-nack
fruitless, vain,

Or a flimsy scarf, a childish toy, or a bubble to
sustain;

Maybe a *memory* slight and dim that quavers
through the dern;

Then the jagged wound breaks out afresh- my
God, thus we beings learn!

TO MISS CANADA

Talk not but creed or religion,
Dreadnoughts, and all such stuff;
Call not your statesmen grafters,
Call not their wisdom bluff;
Threats of reprisal, go banish;
The call of lust, go despise;
Christ! but we intensely honor
The land where the old flag flies.

Deem not your Senate traitors,
Steeped in treason your sons;
Neither are such, but veterans
Wherein the red blood runs;
Look you well to the language,
Therein the danger lies;
And ever shield and honor
The land where the old flag flies.

Not with cant of jingoes
Will ye to heights attain;
Not with malice or glamor
Will ye to all make plain;
Above loot are the people,
Their mottoes, the franchise;
The setless sun doth witness
Wherever the old flag flies.

TO MISS CANADA

Neither with pledges broken
Will ye abroad be known
As one of ideals lofty
Seeking the world's condone;
Seeking the post that's promised,
This may ye eternize—
"Canada, for all ages!"
Wherever the old flag flies!

Not all in party travails,
That tusk their rabid hate
Shall ye abroad be blazoned
With herald's trump innate;
Nor yet in party frame-ups
That vamp misguided fire,
And boast of loyal motives
From platforms of hell-ire.

Your sisters need not flaunt you
Nor look with prim askance,
Nor draw their skirts in langor
To brand you in mischance;
Your famous past still teaches
Your pulse shall surge and rise;
As one of Albion's daughters
Shout, when the old flag flies!

TO MISS CANADA

Or, in the trying moment
Of some misguided writ,
Or intern rank eruption
Decrepit in misfit,
Point to our needled statutes
Won in unselfish age;
*We harry not our kindred,
Let but the culprits rage.*

THE MOOD OF CANADA

Raise wide the shout triumphant,
The cry of battled host;
Go forth fiercely exultant
That seek the danger most!

We sniff, we hunger blindly,
Yet crave the peaceful art;
This to the foeman kindly,
"Ours is no mummer's part."

When War's blind desolation
But threatens our gloried shore,
We rise, O, consolation!
As those that served before.

Then let the word be given,
To all let this be known—
That in the conflict riven,
Where'er our seed be blown.

We die, but no surrender;
We brook no foreign yoke;
Our blood and bones we lend her,
E'er yet one tie be broke.

THE MOOD OF CANADA

The martyred kindred spirits
Will troop from cloven clod;
They rest from conflicts near it—
Dare we disgrace their sod?

Yet not the Dreadnought's glamor,
Not Havoc's dreadful scream,
No blind Politic clamor
Alone we sanely deem.

We woo the sage's counsel,
The art of Peace we coach;
We shun the flimsy tinsel
That brings the sad reproach.

*Then raise the shout triumphant,
The cry of battled host:
We go, fiercely exultant,
We serve our Country most!*

WHAT'S WHAT?

When a fellow's down a bit in his luck
Out at the knees and beastly sick—
When he's hardly above the plastic muck—
Right, old world! just lend him a kick—
Your sympathy.

You'd watched the 'want ads' long for a choice,
You see an opening pause, then wait;
Quickly apply with an anxious voice,
Lo! sweetly the answer floats, "too late"—
Recompense!

You see the other chap scale the cliff,
The thorny trail is sere and tough;
You resurrect some sin of his youth
And blaze it out with slandered stuff—
Generosity!

You get the helping hand in your need
Are lifted out most bogged of the mire;
You turn your head with a flagrant greed
Then rip his back with a mad satire—
That's Thankfulness!

WHAT'S WHAT?

A big moose gets in front of your gun,
You are so sure of his tanned hide
You shoot away but you rake the sun;
"Tis all the gun's fault," loud you cried—
Justification?

That five pound bass that your kind friend caught.
You glommer at with proud dismay,
And then with a mystery o'erwrought,
"I caught a bigger, he got away"
Consolation.

The Doctor chap in the dead of night
Comes with his soft sardonic grins;
You hide your face in a quaking fright
As later he calmly mumurs, "twins"—
Fortune?

While walking down the street in your pride
The way secluded, a dandy beau,
Miss Figleaf-and-feathers joins your side,
You leer on her in a way, so-so—
That's Reciprocity!

When out of work and your cash all spent,
You walk the street all pinched from lack,
You see the dark with the yellow gent (or the
knave that blabs to the boss for a cent,)
Hold down the jobs; do you damn them black?
Sing "The Maple Leaf Forever."

A REMITTANCE MAN

He's just a plain remittance man
Packed off here by a parent's ban;
He was a roving blade at home,
A ne'er-do-well, so doomed to roam;
Just a bit in the way of pa—
Was just a slight mischance to ma;
So off to Canada they sent
The black sheep of the flock, and lent
Him money through, to dawdle West,
With something over, to invest.

So here he is with untrained thews,
Maybe a love of frills and booze;
But then he got the poisoned taste
From years at home in drastic waste
With no set calling but a name,
Sounding big to his bitter shame;
So into Western life he bumps,
That'll soon take out those airy dumps,
That'll get him with touch of tan,
Though he be a remittance man.

There is still in his racing blood
A gift to be never withstood,
A hope to gain, a pang to rise,
Ever the lesser dregs demise,

A REMITTANCE MAN

A nerve the prairies woo and feed
That's centered in the franchised breed;
M'les in clutch of a great no-where
Close converse, as a sealed co-heir,
While the bloated pulse, the flabby thews
Wax strong and lean from simple use.

It's clever what the West will do
In bracing up of brain and thew;
Many a one bucks up all right
Wherein he stands in no one's light;
A chance for all, for all fair play
Still down you go if you won't pay;
But playing game and scheming fair
In buoyant climate; the prairie air
That fills the lungs, the face with tan—
You're a new force remittance man!

The year has antidotes for booze,
The air a calm for untrained thews;
There's tonic in the scragged mile
That dusts o'er nomad trails pensile;
A little farm, a homestead shack,
With odds and ends its garnered snack,
Loot the mind of its ragged sham;
Looks at life in an epigram;
Seeing things in their natural light
Exploits anew a skilled birthright.

A REMITTANCE MAN

He looks not through a liquor glass
On things of life that come to pass;
He bats no more with ditted frills
Nor daisied hose with X-ray thrills;
These things he cut with other tares,
Plucking his first life of its snares—
His poker games, his opera craze
His gilded crest, a rueful maze,
The champagne suppers, lights galore,
Fantastic tripping on the floor.

His homestead's on the Little Arm;
A tidy, paying, well-kept farm;
He's married now, a prairie bred,
A brunette, lithe with docile tread
To serve or fathom a mate's part
In grain fields or the prairies' mart:
Her tutored presence long doth rid
Prairie-life from a state vapid;
Proud she is of her husky man
The voice that's firm, the cheek of tan.

* * * *

Much of your vaunted British fire
Burns to the cinders in desire;
Toss us the cinders if you please,
Gather them from the Seven Seas;

A REMITTANCE MAN

Search where your scattering wits have thrown
This refuse of your blood and bone;
Give them us with their ravaged lives,
Canada freshens! lo! revives!
How she treats, her subjects may learn,
Hers is a motive pure, intern!

COME TO THE SUNSET LAND

Hail to the sunset land
Mellowly spread;
Hail to the crocus land
Azurn and red;
Hail to the pregnant land
In rolling bed.

When from the kiss chinook
Vastitude breathes,
Blushing, the north-west world
Nudity sheathes;
Seemly in bridal form,
Area breathes.

Fitly, the ranges clothed
Hasten the word;
Coulee and lake and slough
With life are stirred;
Broad stretches all agog
Fatten their herd.

What like the prairie
Jaspers the dew!
Sweet to the gulches rim
Bend grasses true;
The muskrat mines the ground
By reedy slough.

COME TO THE SUNSET LAND

Shyly the mallard spies
Whither to stray;
The wavey nests serene
In marshes gray;
The badger scoops his hole
Deep in the clay.

Weirdly the northern wind
Russets the crest;
Fresh from the azure scrub
Gleams the last west;
Far flits the antelope
In pastured quest.

Clear o'er the continent
Zig-zag the trails
Till in its wonderment
History pales;
Rugged in piping earth
Magnitude fails.

What be these stony mounds
Outlawed and high
By every water-course
Moss-bound and dry?
Ah! what a bleaching age
Shrivelled must lie!

COME TO THE SUNSET LAND

Ah! by the smudgy blaze
What shaggy kill!
What hearty lustfulness
Feasting their fill!
Mutely the camp-rings lie
On every hill.

Now in the hunting-fields
Powders no knell;
Chance in the battled feuds
Shambles no hell;
Then—then the hoodooed mound
Shadows her spell.

Gone is the bison's form,
His brutal rage;
Miles of his drivelled bones
Progress the age;
Visaged another scroll
Auras the page.

Miles of the virgin soil
Thawed to the plough
Fruitful the dauntless years
Wooing her now;
She wants no weasy ones—
The strong must bow.

COME TO THE SUNSET LAND

What are the blandishments
Border-land 'trows?
Brambles and sterile hills,
Muskegs and snows?
Stop! 'tis the choice of earth
Noviced, she shows.

Hark! in the swarthy land
Expands the grain;
Fast on its bed of steel
Fires the train;
Deep in the pink of fields
Feed hoof and mane.

Western heritage
Broadened and blest
Is for the sterling ones
Of trying test—
'Tis what she offers you—
Witching bequest!

Far on the blazing trails
Juggles the news,
"Canada welcometh
Bared arms and thews;"
Hers is the willingness,
'Tis yours to choose.

COME TO THE SUNSET LAND

Come to the sunset land—

It's calling you!

• Speak to the trail-end land—

'Tis urging too!

Haste to the promised land—

The welcome's true!

THE SAND-HILL TRAIL

'There's a coyote in the morning
Heard awrangling with a fellow;
And the droning of the prairie
Hath a charm all touched and mellow

How the tang of crocus blossoms
Greet the early morning train,
And with muscles strained and saggy
I must hit the ties again.

All last night I watched the blinking
And diaper of the sky,
As the little dabs of starlets
Elbowed on in lullaby.

And I heard that wond'rous slogan
Heard by dwellers of the plain,
Heard the language of the native
In his unannexed domain.

And I seemed to hear the trampling
Of the bison shake the sod—
Seemed to hear terrific battling—
Those that wrestle flesh from God.

THE SAND-HILL TRAIL

Then I saw the frantic slaughter
Of the last stand quail the earth;
Then about was horror, blackness,
Reeking stench, and wanton dearth.

Then I seemed to shake and quiver
As afar I thought I heard
That strange coming of a people—
And they could not be deterred.

Once again I heard that murmur
As I heard it long ago
When I was a common squaw-man
With my hybrid offspring, so.

But along with age of progress
Came a malady so strange—
And I saw the simple people
Dying off the well known range.

Then I found myself one morning,
With my burden on my back,
Hiking for outlandish places,
And I thought I'd ne'er come back.

Years of heart-ache in the gloaming,
Years of lassitude and hate—
Back I trudged to well known places,
With a two-lung test of fate.

THE SAND-HILL TRAIL.

To the fast obscuring landmarks
And the ashes of a race;
Now I know a few more seasons
Will not leave a single trace.

There my tepee stood this morning—
Where's my blanket, pony, gun?
Yonder threads the great Arm Valley
Where the choicest bison run.

* * * *

Found within a railroad hovel
Just a wrinkled, battered tramp;
And his dead form in the darkness
Is all musty, mutely damp.

Cover him upon this hillside—
Other dead were here before;
See those ancient mounds and hillocks
And those camp-rings mossed and hoar!

QU'APPELLE

When the moon at kiss of dawn
Traced deathless shades on Nature's lawn—
Then he touched the etching well—
Thou wert ushered, blest Qu'Appelle!

Hung the rainbow out to dry,
Drew its lavishments from high,
Brushed them throbbing to excell—
Laurels thine, O, blue Qu'Appelle!

Robbed the lightning of his flame,
Put his fire in thy name;
Threw the thunder in a cell—
Thine the jailer, bold Qu'Appelle!

Sent the dew-drops forth to cool,
Breathed their nectars in the pool;
Edged the rim with tinted shell—
Ecstasy is thine, Qu'Appelle!

QU'APPELLE

Legends hover in thy shade,
Milestones of the West are laid;
Mirages and moods, what spell!
Thou are beautiful, Qu'Appelle!

An oasis in a dream,
Shaggy hillsides, wavy stream,
Tinkling quiver of a bell—
Eden's garden, charmed Qu'Appelle!

LA CLOCHE

Crested wave and foamy flake
Play against the leaf-girt shore;
And the deeper tone of lake
Faintly throbs the sullen roar.

And I see a thousand streams
Mirrored 'twixt these plots of land;
Realistic are the dreams—
Sheering cliffs and stern foreland.

Flotsam of the lazy foam,
How the leafy eddies shift,
Gently onward in the gloam,
Surging down with mingled drift!

Pilot of the scene engrossed,
Sinks the sun in forest fast;
Fairyland seems here embossed;
Tinkling light from towering mast,

Hold revel the merry night
Nosing down with witching glide;
Full of vagary, some bight
Brushes past the traffic-side.

LA CLOCHE

Oh! what pleasure here to be,
Oh! what beauty on the wave;
See! adown the ideal sea,
Many thousand islands rave!

So when mid-heat days are come
And the sweltry towns all pant,
Let me fly their senseless hum,
Give me back the water's chant.

Long the cooling wavelets float,
Urging all to come and take;
Welcome sound of oar and boat
Hails the freedom of the lake!

WASCANA

Come, western-bred, come ride with me tonight,
The prairie lawn hath novelty and light,
Majesty, modesty, etched upon the sward:
The trail alone doth chaperone and guard.

How rare the bondage yield I to thine eyes,
Love's cordial oozes to imparadise;
Far above nonsense is their gay rampart,
The safety gauge of all within thine heart.

The faint patrols that scout the evening sky
Are all the witnesses that filter nigh;
But come, my love, our saddles sway anon,
Our ponies leap and trample to begone.

On many acres flags the gipsy mile,
There is no distance measured mercantile;
Love is a wassail on the rocking trail,
Life is a friendly flitting to regale.

How crush the crocuses to shambled tread,
An orgy of color for a bed;
How shy with incense float the native stains,
That rise in fantasy before our reins.

WASCANA

Beyond the skyline, hoof-free is our race,
The honeyed coulee doth seduce our pace;
Past its wry mouth we float; beguiled, inwreathed,
'Twere sacrilege to break; our speech is
sheathed.

On some stayed billow halt our docile steeds,
Remote from care or earth's more fancy
breeds;
And here the air is ripe with harping sound—
There is no silence on the prairie round.

What may—what may this haunting token be?
What record of the past is lilting free?
Leave to the prairie all her ycleped song,
We back to earth must harry and belong.

Back, homeward springing do we ride and rest,
A homestead shack our stronghold, palaced
nest;
Here may we live while love allotted spans,
Prairie-born, raised, West's true artisans!

VOICE OF A PRODIGAL

I go to thee from the blaze-aged trail,
Claim of thee heart of the wild;
I heard thy call when my hope did pall,
I come, thy prodigal child.

For I am sick of the husks and dregs,
The fawning farce of men,
The whoring lust of the folk I trust,
And the dry aims in their den.

I loved at first the passioned strife,
The rending fight for light,
But frenzied gain for the sin of Cain
I could not sanction quite.

I've learned to hate the vain conceit,
The flashy rush for place,
The wanton tares, earth's sordid snares
And the blight on hungered face.

I go to thee from earth's grim trail,
Claim of thee, heart of the wild;
I heard thy call when my hope did pall,
For I am but Nature's child.

LURE OF THE PRAIRIE

O, come to me, Heart of the prairie!
Pronounce in my ear that I may be free;
Hum me the tales of the deviate trails;
Sweet Heart of the vastness! to live on in thee!

I see in my dreams the low wallowed sloughs,
The moon-shaded coulees gemmed in their dew,
The wolf-willow lush, the gray dawn, the crush,
Wild thorny roses, the crocus all blues.

Uncleared of its withes the soil smacks the sky,
The trail-ends are droning in lullaby;
There on the plain draws the smoke of a train,
The old age is gaping, girth-strings awry.

And then do I see a vision more wide
The grain scintillating like a full tide;
The homes mid the green in gladdening sheen,
I know then Progress approaches his bride.

Still, come to me, Heart of the prairie!
Pronounce in my ear that I may be free;
Hum me the tales of the deviate trails;
Sweet Heart of the freshness, to live on in thee!

A SONG OF STEEL

Halifax saw me Westward melt;
Empire bold, I am thy belt;
The long trail-ends I braid and bind,
I fly, Vancouver to my kind.

My minions comb the ocean's crest,
They writhe along and do their best;
That I in stages post by post
Might bear me trade from coast to coast.

Winnipeg in her infancy,
Bold Edmonton and Calgary—
Regina? Sure! and Saskatoon,
Seed of my joy in honeymoon!

Then Moose Jaw of my iron flail,
With Brandon and Prince Albert; Hail!
Ah, Weyburn, welcome! I pass by;
Who nurtures cities, proves the fry.

And though I am betokened chaste
I boom such things in healthy haste;
And though I breast productive modes
My retinues uphold my codes.

A SONG OF STEEL.

I am earth's potentate today ;
Throngs retract to my right-of-way ;
Glad they are of my modest writ
Where I with trophied recruits, sit.

With frugal vesture I perspire,
Even the millionaire I sire ;
And though I boast an Empire's hoard,
Earth's brainiest sit at my board.

I rip earth's spine to make circuit ;
My navvies carve ; my wits recruit ;
My legions mock at altitude
And sledge me on in ambitude.

I race the eagle to the sky,
I pause to-peep, his nest is nigh ;
I rush the giddy, rocking brim,
Embrace the ledge and screech at him.

A silhouette in starred moonshine,
I hang o'er guttered wilds of pine ;
Approving of my mountain bed
I clasp the verdant glades ahead.

A SONG OF STEEL.

With the chill avalanche I chum,
The glacier veers that I may come;
I lift the latch at the abyss
To flag the sylph the doting kiss.

I mine the ground where building's tough
I tunnel through and that's enough;
I bore beneath where none may bridge;
My gaping eyelets vent the ridge.

I woo the corresponsive mile;
Each chained post is a mark utile;
The wheat-belt I corral and hold,
The rich cache all is mine; behold.

Eventually I penetrate
Each loyal nook with grade elate;
The scrip of farmland, forest, mine,
These do I wreath in rare intwine.

Whither by leagues of scrub I stray
My stall-fed steeds strike manfully;
Afar from habitation's craft
In miraged pond the lean shades waft.

A SONG OF STEEL.

I draw, I glide, I claw, I wrest,
Never in bootless paths unblest—
Ever to call's urgent desire
Ever the thrifty span of hire.

Unbound I stretch from West to East
And each day's life is a wholesome feast;
And though I wear a Nation's crest,
I'm a youngster yet out for conquest.

Stronger I am from each exploit,
Sinewy with a skill adroit;
How I vaunt as I steam and wheel,
Loud in my song, my song of steel!

A MUSE OF THE GRAIN FIELDS

I stand on the whim of ages,
Years cool beneath my feet;
Away stretch the fields like pages—
The fields of the golden wheat.
'Tis strange how they gleam and quiver,
The brown, golden and green,
As the wind's remotest shiver
Changes each moment the sheen.
And the swelling plants all quicken,
In life to the grasping roots;
And the whole fields toil and thicken,
To breed the mulch-seeking shoots.
Here rest the homes of a people,
The people that live on the plains;
They serve out their hopeful existence
In the fairest of happy domains.
The yearly spoils are before us
The flood gates of harvest let drop;
That sweet lull of peace comes o'er us
In taking of this season's crop.
Still, I stand on the whim of ages,
Charm holds me bound to the spot;
And I sigh, yes, I sigh as the pages
Unroll, and time is forgot.

HOMESTEADING

Homesteading on the prairie,
Trying the gamester's luck,
The ragged life of the service
Filleth the back-bone with pluck;
Days of a militant purpose
Grimly wrestled I deem;
Nights of languishing waiting,
Vigilance, penance and dream.

Picking up coal on the Railway—
(The Company did not mind)
Toting it off in a barrow,
Joying o'er each lumpy find;
Breaking out guards for the owners,
Taking the cull ties for pay;
Anything for employment,
Burning the months away.

Ploughing sods from a dry slough,
Banking my flimsy shack—
Clear to the roof I laid them
Tier upon tier and pack;
Drudging me forth to the village,
Haunting the office stairs,
Guessing the tardy letters
The flagging postman bears.

HOMESTEADING

Long I remember a winter
Blizzardy, frost-pierced, obscure,
Burning straw for a fire,
Life was so hard to endure;
Doing my six months' service,
Winning my covered bet,
Singing my cheery slogan
Clear to the last day set.

Days of a diligent purpose,
Towering vastitude, might—
Here was my august fortress—
I was a border knight,
Stoning the Country's basement,
Squaring an Empire's bin,
Bricking them down with an effort,
Forging the last bolt in.

Stolen years have their ransoms,
Checkered time has a task;
Many an airy bubble
Films our lives as a mask;
Still does a fathomless **something**
Pencil my wandering trail—
A homely shack on the prairie
Chuckful of lush, ripe and hale—
SO LONG! OLD BROWN SHACK ON THE HOMESTEAD—
LASHIONS OF HOPE, POND AND FRAIL!

THE PRAIRIE FIRE

Panting o'er the bronzy prairie
Comes a rasping, crackling tone
As the shriek of fire! fire!

Warns us of the danger zone;
Licking up the sizzled grasses
Blares a million tongues of flame,
With a million shoots and passes—
Frenzied, writhing, swiftly game!

Racing o'er the slaggy ridges,
Licking up the acrid sward,
Kicking out in grappled places,
Jumping every fire-guard;
So it swoops upon its quarry
Seeking freshly garnered meat,
The rich stooks across the stubble—
Laden stooks of oats and wheat.

Here a granary, there a dwelling
Right within its fumid path;
Who may stay or thwart the demon?
All must feed its howling wrath;
Fanned and fed to further fury
So it creeps across the plain,
Then it leaps upon its victims
In a livid thrust of pain.

THE PRAIRIE FIRE

How the prairie chickens whirring
Speed away while yet 'tis time;
Here a rabbit, there a coyote
And a fox in pantomime;
From the common terror fleeing
All race travails are eschewn;
From the fangs of tribal custom
The small life are now immune.

It will never stop when gluttoned,
All its being raves for more;
It's a prostitute, a vixen,
A grim phantom evermore;
It's the prairies' baneful bogey,
'Tis the hoodoo of the trail;
When you note it's skinny talons
Do not cavil, but assail!

'Tis no time to quib or parry
Nor to question or resist;
There's a ruling of the country
And its usage is assiduous;
To the rancher and the farmer
To the hired man, the clerk,
Do your duty in a hurry,
Boldness calls you, do not shirk!

Do not counsel why or wherefor,
Do not for permission prate;
Maybe through procrastination
You will dally on too late;
Even while we speak, the gourmand
Snatches at its tender prey,
And in kindled consternation
Strikes down, feasts, and then away!

THE PRAIRIE FIRE

Like a bronco bucking, striking
Diving, twisting in a fright,
Does the wind in gusts and flurries
Hurl the flames upon the night!
Unimpaired, still gluttonizing,
Indeterminate they join,
And in callous fascination
Worry, harry and purloin.

How we plan to quench its thralldom,
How we hate its impish leer!
How we loathe its wanton rancor—
The West's sordid privateer!
Not a qualm of tender conscience,
Truthful penitence demure;
It's a parasite, a jingo,
Braggart, tainted epicure!

Then we hang upon the outskirts,
A hot crowd of panting folk,
Beating out the flamy felons,
Guarding, foiling stroke by stroke;
How we fight begrimed and dirty
Each a soggy gunny-sack—
Save the pastures of the valleys,
Meadowed hay in coil and stack.

Cautious in the direst moments,
Back-fire the bordered grass,
Guiding where the fuel is thinnest,
Forcing to some futile pass;
Then it breaks away in dudgeon
Fleeing on before the wind,
As we slack our unique struggles
Enveloped in smoke behind.

THE PRAIRIE FIRE

Midnight smothers on the prairie
And the ground is weirdly black,
Here the remnants of a granary,
There the charrings of a shack;
Miles away the sky is hoary
With the pillaged, lurid smoke,
In a thick sulphurous blanket,
Tumid, leering ere it broke.

Swung above the murky billows
Shoot the nuggets of the dark,
And their rare illuminations
Wink and stage each flamed landmark;
Genius of the evening glimmers
Settles low the rumpled moon,
And phenomenally emblazoned
Trails earth's periscope in tune.

In the shank of gulping morning
Comes a plashy, gusty rain
Freshly o'er the parched country
And the grass oozes again;
Then we count the fire losses,
Sympathetical; condole,
Glad to see that on the homesteads
Much was saved, though not the whole.

TO THE LEADER OF THE WILD GEESE

Bold old leader of the flocks
What may be your little yarn?
By what lakelet, marsh or slough,
Lonesome muskeg, reedy tarn,
Did you spring to leadership
Of your wingy, agile flock?
Did you win in social spree
Or a combat's feathery shock?

Did there some old grizzled bird
Far from any human haunt
Vex and cross you with his hate?
Challenge you with sprightly taunt?
Then with hissing repartee
Did you butt him to the jar,
And with all your bird-like speed
Fight it out on some sand-bar?

Thus you won the championship
Marked with many a tufted welt;
Won the colony in the deal;
There was no inscribed belt.

TO THE LEADER OF THE WILD GEESE

Neither was there costly store,
Nor a jewel-studded crown,
Purple raiment or apparel—
Just your robe of feathered down.

What advantage may you gain?
What may be your fine reward
For the lonely tryst you keep?
For the homely trust you guard?
Do you feel your feathers glow,
Does your being fluff in pride?
Will you close your bachelor days,
Take some shy, elusive bride?

Where inland the nestlings learn
All the witchcraft of the wise
Where the mating flocks all breed
Where the southern play-grounds rise;
How to plan the pilgrimage
By the new moon and the sun!
Fix the lay of lake and stream
Ere the journey has begun.

You have got a zealous charge
You must champion the while,
Weary miles of ambuscade,
One wide continent hostile;

TO THE LEADER OF THE WILD GEESF

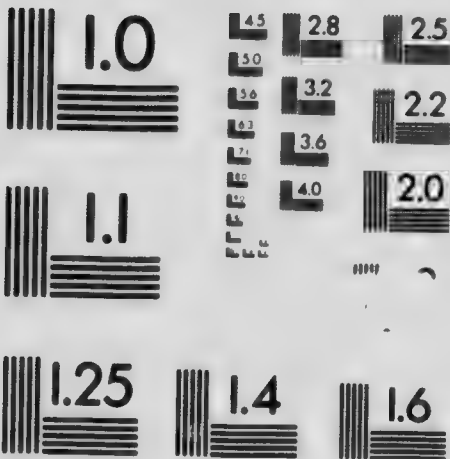
You must keep your title good,
Keep your squadrons sentry-spanned;
Patrol well with careful eye,
Vouch each passage through the land.

Sudden from some feeding place
With a grisly, ghastly roar,
Lashes out a fusilade,
Cuts your flock all sere and hoar!
'Tis a tragedy of fate,
Just a picture of the wild;
Far away your haunting honk
On the skyline is profiled!



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THE BLIZZARD AND AFTER

Imaged is the prairie prosy
Dotted with its countless shacks;
And the winter's day is cosy;
Scarce a jot the vision lacks;
How illustrious! how enchanting!
And I feel my life-blood rise;
For I love the frosty ranting
With the sun-dogs in the skies.

Soon the sky draws light and foaming
Paling with a frosty rant,
Till it seems one muddled gloaming,
One capricious rift and pant;
Fluffs of snow start drifting, sifting,
Softly first, then hammer blows,
Throbbing higher, fencing, lifting,
In an avalanche of snows.

Now the northland roused to raging
Shrieks aloud in vim to flay,
In the atmospheric staging
Brushes off the perfect day—
First with buffeted stray flurries
Warning all, and then the streak,
All the lep'rous bolts he hurries,
Bellows down with awful shriek.

THE BLIZZARD AND AFTER

Searching out the battered places,
Hurtling, lashing in his might,
Rushing in bombastic races,
Screening out the wholesome light;
Then the land of the prairie
Raves a wilderness of snows;
The brave land triumphant, airy,
Writhes within stupendous throes.

Most chaotic are the ranges
In a mad whirlwind of piles,
As the shuffling, jostling changes
Drizzle out the weary miles;
Not a landmark, not a dwelling
In the drear convulsive waste;
How the wind keeps groaning, knelling,
And the snow adheres like paste!

How the fickle, fleecy hazes,
Tangle on in freakish whim!
And the crunching, angry mazes
Thresh and flounder to the brim!
Just a horrid, stifling vortex,
Just a piracy of gloom!
Just an intricate contex
Spun from a distorted loom!

How profound between each ringing
Horror stalks—and snow, hail, ice,
Cutting, keen and deathly stinging,
And they throttle like a vice;
Agitated the fanatic
Swoops with sudden thrust to dare,
So persistent, so erratic,
Caviled, pregnant with a snare.

THE BLIZZARD AND AFTER

Do not latch your window shutter,
Do not shade your flimsy light;
Maybe out amongst the splutter
Limps some victim of the night;
Pile the dwindling embers higher,
Let the kettle's simmer stay;
Chance the glimmer of your fire
Succors some lone castaway.

Neither woo the brooding lullings,
Pass not out to try the trail;
There are more begotten cullings
As deceptive with travail;
Betrayal and deadly swagger
Subtle infamy there lies;
There is combat, treason, stagger—
Flee a gambling with the skies.

Comes a morning clear and cheery,
Cold across Saskatchewan plains;
With a feeling queer and eery
Look I forth to vast domains;
A weird mirage, pillared, gleaming,
Flames outlined against the West,
Raw, fantastic, seeming, dreaming,
'Midst the scenes I love the best.

Distance is a whim in passing;
There's Arm Valley pencilled high;
Shacks are springing, growing, massing;
Long Lake hangs so strangely nigh;
With the chiselled skyline blending
Are a myriad hoofs unstrung—
The wild brones who southward trending
Are from homing pastures flung.

THE BLIZZARD AND AFTER

Almost typic, how ascendent
Is depicted the Qu'Appelle!
Sentinelled her banks resplendent
Trace the fabric of the spell;
Pinions of the morn's acuteness
Scintillize in giddy gleam;
And the whimsical minuteness
Puzzles like a cadent dream.

Is this earth's seraphic phasm
That could photograph such form?
Exorcism or phantasm,
Some rare handiwork of storm?
Diapered but drowsy, dreamy,
Is the colony in air;
And its colors flamy, beamy
Change like cruising, swift corsair.

Then a city, visioned, sparkling,
Pearly, icicled in cold,
With its streaming splendor darkling
Gives a touch of hammered gold;
Then it changes, fades, defying,
In the beams of level sun;
And I turn away half sighing
To another task begun.

From a mound so white and hoary
Flutters out a bit of rag;
Lo! it proves another story
Of the blizzard's bitter drag;
Just a lone homsteader jumbled
Packing grub from out the store,
And he missed the trail and stumbled,
Missed his own familiar door!

THE BLIZZARD AND AFTER

How perplexed the muffled madness!

Not a voice to anguished cry!

Not an answered shout in gladness

To checkmate the gloating sky!

Demoniac the illusion!

Lethargic is his tread!

And his senses in obtusion

Do not scent the stalking dread!

So he wanders freezing, chilling,

With the storm upon his back,

And the blinding chaos milling

Drives him far from trail or shack;

Long he wrestles sore and tired,

Then he staggers down to sleep—

Christ! his veins seem pricked and fired—

Ah! he sleeps so stiffly deep.

Sleep, no morn shall e'er awaken—

Sleep, without one faint respire—

Sleep, too sound to e'er be shaken,

From the ghastly, icy pyre!

Then the flurries go on weaving

• His still form in a cocoon;

And the ghostly flakes achieving

Howl to phantom rigadoon.

Life for him no more is weary,

It has lost its taxing drag;

Surely now, vivacious, cheery,

Burnished from the slavish slag;

Bear him sadly, bear his slowly,

Ah! so mutely quenched and stark—

So subdued, so quelled and lowly—

Frozen stiff without a mark.

THE BLIZZARD AND AFTER

In the tragedy we're giving
We peruse his pensive tale;
Other scenes for him were living
When we scan his foreign mail;
For we had adjudged him wary
Of recital of the past;
Here it is in words statary,
All more simple by contrast.

'Tis a freshly claimed epistle
And it bears a British stamp;
And at first I needs must whistle,
As I read it by the lamp;
Some frail words of mindful comfort,
Lightsome chaff, then merry drawl,
Counsel, caution of deport,
Written in a gentle scrawl.

Confidential thoughts enthusing
Outlines of **HER** coming trip;
Asks about the **route** confusing,
Of the **passage** and the **ship**;
Warns him to be sure and tarry
Day and date in Saskatoon
With the '**LICENSE**' for to marry,
And the nuptial ties eftsoon.

Said, "I hope the shack is fitting
For my coming in the Spring;"
Pouts but slyly, teasing, twitting
Of her sparkling, pearly ring;
Tells him, "Do be ever mindful
How you keep yourself from harm;"
Asks him, "Do be brave and cheerful,
Till I join you on the farm."

THE BLIZZARD AND AFTER

Hinting of another rival—

 This is but a heedless lark,
A mute frolicsome revival,
 Just a common-place remark;
Yet how near the truth she twitters;
 Death's grim factor comes between;
And his mocking stab imbitters
 Glowing hopes that might have been.

Here the chatter trails in closing
 To a fervor coy and droll;
And I grip at life's hard posing
 As I put away the scroll;
Then the photo of a damsel
 (Draped with clumsy fashioned care,
In a clustered twist of tinsel)
 Hangs—such ropes of elflocked hair.

Eyes that haunt you, blue, suborning,
 Etched from Albion's girdling sea;
Lips the rival of the morning,
 Bust, were ever such to see!
Now I know why Albion mothers
 Suckle such bold prairie sons;
How the red blood seethes and smothers
 When it through such amours runs!

List! a moon-struck coyote sputters
 In a ghoulish dirge forlorn;
And his acute wailing flutters
 In a bitterness inborn;
Soon a sudden bang and jingle
 Takes us jumping to the floor;
'Tis a Mountie, nerves atingle
 From a cold ride at the door.

THE BLIZZARD AND AFTER

Needs must fill the last oblation,
Prove how death had entered in,
If by fault of man's creation,
Or mischance's origin;
Then about the fitful glaring
In the Western homestead shack
We keep watch, the vigil sharing
Till the morning hungers back.

There will be no simple pledging
Day and date in Saskatoon;
Now I know the blizzard's sledging
Bears a ready pall and shoon;
As we turn his effects over
To the Mountie to safeguard,
Whisper sadly, "One more rover;"
Yes! he had our great regard.

Spring has granted her oblation,
Neighbor hands must till the soil;
And the prairie's fascination
Is alive with rugged toil;
Some one meekly, some one ever
Long will wear the token gave—
Sad! Atlantic does them sever,
And a freshly clodded grave.

Still I love the prairie prosy
Dotted with its homestead shacks
When the winter's day is cosy,
And the range no vision lacks;
But I understand her motives
As perhaps she gauges me;
All her thrills, her moods, her votives—
These are mine; so let it be.

BALLAD OF BOW RIVER CROSSING

This is a tale of eighty-five
Ragged red-skins on the stern drive,
Booted, bludgeoned, thrust away back,
Vim knocked out for making attack.

Battleford was then on the map,
Known to fame as the final scrap;
'Twas rueful work wormed in the dirt,
Playing hop to a bullet's squirt.

Hurie, the trusted sleuth-like scout,
Lassoed bold Riel no one may doubt;
The Mounted Police in their role
Kept him in guard, nor dared parole.

The plains were new and wildly queer,
No fit place to show nerves or fear;
Life at most was a trifle raw,
Freshly clutched from the rebel's maw.

These were the times of hurry and speed,
Sorry redskins on the stampede,
Hiding their guns, hatchets and knives,
Seeking hope for themselves and wives.

BALLAD OF BOW RIVER CROSSING

There was distrustful pain distraught
Until the leading bloods were caught
And were brought to trial, which was right,
Inciting riot--a civil fight.

So we hanged Riel; a bitter dope
Stretching the end of a loose rope,
Breaking the pride of the proud folk
Thinking to hack the British yoke.

We lashed the ever pliant chiefs,
Hoodooed the braves and jailed the thieves;
Dealing justice with a stern hand--
Kind withal for such a rough land.

A paltry scattering of whites
Settled the land now set to rights,
With more still coming on the treck,
Hardships alone couldst hardly check.

A single ligament of rail
Spanned the land by a time-worn trail;
Its rolling stock all pressed to use
With freight, to carry and diffuse.

The throbbing engine's pant and ring
Sounded weird where the reds had swing,
Snorting flame from slits in its head
Waking a thousand years of dead.

BALLAD OF BOW RIVER CROSSING

So we sent home the warring troops,
Grizzled men in their lusty groups;
Each to his wonted sphere he went,
Pleased with the life to country lent.

Here and there the police at post
Stood for the law they guarded most;
Sleuths of the crime that ever harried,
Ever the foot of man hath carried.

And thus still rode to gather in
Some bad breeds for their former sin;
'Twas, "Saddle and mount and then away
Get your man in the early day."

Often a scatt'ring fusilade
From some lone camp delayed the raid;
Or a shot from some scragged bluff—
A brush, till parley cried enough.

The fun was real, the danger plain;
Many that rode were brought in slain;
Then went forth the fame of the force
That beggared crime of all resource.

Oh! but the men had many lives,
Safe returns from a round of drives,
Knitting the frame a hardy bleach
Massing the thews while stretching the reach

BALLAD OF BOW RIVER CROSSING

Kenna, one of the mounted force,
Rode with the rest—a fact, of course
Shared their dangers, their work or fun,
Hazarded the spit of a gun.

Long as he blazed, the chiselled men
Who rode circuit and back again,
From Garry, Westward to the hills
Toughened with outpost work and drills.

Here I'm sorry memory clings
To his frail faults; of all the things,
He loved his bit of pilfered booze—
"Scotch" preferred, when he had to choose.

Sergeant Beanpost with a crack squad
Rode all day on a trail dry-shod,
Came with the evening to the ford,
Stopped to camp in a gay accord.

Would cross the Bow in early morn,
Full of a promise all inborn;
Hope flies high on a prairie day
To tighten saddles—then away!

Half a league in the evening's damp
All jumbled stood the Blackfeet camp;
Chief Crowfoot through a stalwart scout
Sent a message, spicy, devout.

BALLAD OF BOW RIVER CROSSING

Asked for the men to make a call
One 'heap big time' and roan for all;
A tribal feast in camp tonight—
We know these things, all right, all right!

Crowfoot, known as a gritty chief,
Had not fought to his own relief;
Had loyal stood with every buck
Much to his after shown good luck.

Leave of absence was soon obtained,
Only a guard at camp remained;
Sweating down in the evening dim,
Full of hope of the promised vim,

Wrestled our Kenna all alone
Full of "fire-water" to the bone;
Some stray coins, a smuggled flask,
Pleased withal at the imposed task.

Graces and dudgeons of the night,
May they be banished from the sight—
Scenes that never may hope return
While human fibre sully or burn.

As Kenna trudged him back to camp
What scare's this in the chilly damp,
So weird, tall, sinister, no sound,
That drooled at him from spooky mound?

BALLAD OF BOW RIVER CROSSING

Gimlet-eyed, skinny, grinning there,
It jostled him with raving stare!
It whirled with waltzing, teasing swing
Round in a dizzy, closing ring!

It flopped and fluttered (so it seemed)
A lep'rous sprite all unredeemed;
Appeared to him in puzzling pall
Fully and really ten feet tall!

Around it wormed foul wiggling snakes
Full of their clammy, writhing quakes;
They stood on tails with shooting fangs
Lolling hot from their poisoned tangs.

Their darting eyes like daggers gored,
Their cunning wiles his being bored;
They crawled and shivered, then like a rocket
Each stampeded for his pocket.

Of all the frights he ever met
Oh! this thing was the vilest yet!
As with the snakes stretched a skinny hand,
And then did Kenna lose command!

The great Bow River bellied near—
He hit for it in a nervous fear;
He leaped and climbed, he clawed through space
In this his greatest known footrace.

BALLAD OF BOW RIVER CROSSING

He to the water took discreet,
(No decent ghost e'er wets its feet)
And there he shivered in a punk,
Unnerved to leave his watery bunk.

They got him in the cooling morn
Rory-eyed still and quite forlorn,
Mixed in his dates, wild in his bloke,
In no mood to endure a joke.

"A nip of the West," the Sergeant said,
"There is no rising from the dead
To plague the dupes on the River Bow
Who swill the slobbering slops of woe.

And then such snakes could hardly breed,
Where there is scarcely gopher-feed;
And no such noxious varmints run
Free beneath an Alberta sun."

He got his trial, no defence,
A trifling sentence for offence;
Dismissed the **FORCE**, there was the stain
To a bold rider of the plain.

This is no libel on the force,
Kenna will vouch the facts of course;
Perhaps still further man to man
'Twas all within the red-eye can.

BALLAD OF BOW RIVER CROSSING

Often does Kenna in a roast
Mention the horror of his ghost;
But if you want it bare and keen.
A bit of the yellow faked his spleen.

Often in mumbling words of booze
Over this drony tale he chews—
The spook, the snakes, the midnight run,
And the Bcw that SNITCHED his sacred gun.

MOUNTIE TATE

Now George S. Tate was ordained of fate to woo
his spurs in the West;
We called him "kid" and the worst he did was to
laugh at our odd bequest;
With eyes a deep blue that skidding came through
beneath great shocks of hair,
A heart as mild as a simple child; true comradeship
sheltered there.

But George S. Tate I am telling straight, could
rough it a bit and shoot;
A Mountie goes in his service clothes well groomed
to his polished boot;
He seeks no grip of a slim worship by those that
revere the nerve;
He stands for code while on the road, and the law
is his God to serve.

Could shoot his wad, commit his God in the lip of
a smuggled flask,
For life at most, at a flinty post, is rather a shock-
ing task,
And a little fun, a harmless run when the soul cries
for a chum
Is a trifling fling and a relished swing; affinity is
mum.

MOUNTIE TATE

But eyes of blue, tempered and true, are not of the
craven's lean brand;

Can narrow down with a slitting frown and set
with a stern demand;

It's, "throw up your dooks and try no flukes," when
heat swings wild in your head;

It's, "be dashed quick and it's try no tricks and
yield up your gun instead."

In trailing remote some lewd cut-throat to lay him
fast by the heel,

Defies all ease and takes off obese and lines the
thews with tried steel;

It's rush right in though the chance be thin,
with death on a finger crook;

It's turn not back from the attack and jar up his
nerves with a look.

And that's the worst, you must be first to witness
your quarry's fire,

When sick with dope and a bitter hope he vents
his vapid ire;

The risk is real and it's chance a deal for God,
country, and name,

And yet that pause with the square-set jaws has
shaken many an aim.

MOUNTIE TATE

Still, they are not to be seemed or thought mostly
Canadian born ;

The British Isles know these merry smiles or these
dreadnought looks of scorn ;

And some we brag who have known the flag of
many an alien shore,

The life the same grew a trifle tame, so they gave
it's service o'er.

Yes, boys all there from a God-knows-where, all
seasoned and strongly true ;

Some with a past, a sallow cast, a ghost-in-the-
closet clue ;

A to-forget from some fast set, and a wish to begin
—but pshaw !

They wisely fall to the prairie's call and join the
sleuths of the law.

'Twas Brimstone Jack in his sod-piled shack had
beat up his wife a bit,

Defied the law with a booze-hot jaw and swore that
he would not quit

Or go alive on the little drive that ends in the
prison pen,

Would buck life's span like a border man, cash in
on the blood of men.

MOUNTIE TATE

He had a mark-some life laid stark in the sludge of
a bum saloon,
Had missed the rope by the slimmest scope, the jail
by the merest boon;
A rogue inborn with a scoffing scorn and a jeering
cast of life,
A Fargo maid had by him stayed and so had he
taken a wife.

Then he took a slant on a homestead grant on our
Canadian side,
And for a bit he had kept his wit and tried as he
never tried,
To mop his slate of the dreadful weight of his
sordid, checkered sins;
In Willow Bunch he had got his hunch and the tale
anew begins.

So crazy with rum he had made things hum, and
none may venture near,
A forty-four is a large bore and not to be met with
a sneer,
When backed by a nerve that will not swerve or
bow to the will of fate,
Unless at most from the nearest post they hustle
for George S. Tate.

MOUNTIE TATE

For be he fool or a tarnal tool, he fears the Mounted
Police —

The Indian brave or the horse-thief knave or the
black-leg out to fleece—

That force whose hand will harry and land, though
hid by a name and worth

Though you break South, though you dally North,
or hide in a cleft of earth.

You may take to the scrub, there is no grub; they'll
nab you without fail;

Then jump a freight with an anxious wait; they'll
get you the end of rail;

You may mount and ride all sallow-eyed, hot, evil
and battle-jarred;

But the end's a cinch, the bracelet's clinch and a
Mountie keeps you guard!

The Mounted Police, through festive peace, are full
of a tiny war,

Their tunics speak on every bleak from the 'Peg' as
she points afar;

They're in with speed on a fool stampede, they
pilot the throbbing hives;

If a cat has nine, then ten and nine a Mounted
Police has lives!

MOUNTIE TATE

When the "Kid" got there on the affair, had Jack
like an outlaw flown;

"Kid" took his trail without the least quail, and he
followed it alone;

He simply said, "I may crimp his head, I may bring
him back alive,

Or for coyote treat there'll be some meat; the nervi-
est will survive."

Like a wolf's jowl his canine scowl, as Jack bent to
a wild escape;

He looked about with a covert doubt, ahead with
a rigid gape;

Not a homestead shack to feed his lack, he lathered
him on alone;

Far in his rear, in his fighting gear came Tate on
his wall-eyed roan.

He played bo-peep while his glass did sweep ridge,
coulee and scrub and plain—

To make a slip or to make a trip might make his
journey in vain—

He timed advance for to take no chance to give Jack
the nutty drop;

He lay him low with a slight so-so, for even the
hunted stop.

MOUNTIE TATE

He trailed him through by wallowing slough, and
the day was dark and cool,
No mud had dried on the bleak wayside but riled
was each petty pool;
He followed gruff by poplar bluff and the way was
bleached and sere,
Yet on his face no care did trace though he sensed
his quarry near.

A light did gleam on the sluggish stream where the
outlaw had made camp;
The other spied in the dark outside, in the even-
ing's fleering damp;
He watched awhile, with a dour smile, and he
found where Brimstone lay,
With a wicked stare; his guns showed bare as only
the hunted may.

Then out stepped George, and his voice did scourge
so menacing cool and raw,
With, "yield up, Jack, and come on back, submit
to the will of the law!"
But Jack just jumped and the cold lead pumped, as
he kicked out, breaking free;
But George not a saint had made a feint and clinch-
ed in a mixed melee.

MOUNTIE TATE

On the force they know, and I trow it's so, a
man's more trouble dead;

It's get him alive, e'en to survive, there's a spare
rope-end ahead;

In the jury-room there'll be a broom; his life will
they show unbarred,

Then some fine day not far away will he stroll in
the prison yard.

Or breaking stone with a grilling bone and a hope
that's dead as punk;

'Tis manhood jars at prison bars; it's no wonder
the beggars flunk;

It's the brute that sears in prison gears and slaves
in the zebra stripes;

There is a soul beyond control and it strives in the
worst of types.

A College Eleven, captained and driven, teach well
the tackling game;

Regimental bouts with the clean knock-outs will
ripen the seasoned frame;

So the Kid just pitched and he humped and hitched
in a sort of soft surprise,

And Brimstone Jack was hurled way back and he
dreamed that his soul did rise.

MOUNTIE TATE

That nifty stroke upon the bloke was the nearest
he got to grace,

He heaved awake with a gnawing ache ; the dust in
his scowling face ;

He groaned a bit and he cursed a bit then begged
in an artful guise,

But George, reserved in speech, unswerved, smok-
ed, dozed till the sun did rise.

George helped him on in the early dawn, and he
rode with him to town,

Ignored the chaff with a careless laugh and took
his prisoner down,

Who will get his dues minus the booze, according
to British law ;

And George S. Tate, I am telling straight, is a
trump—not a yellow crow.

LEGEND OF THE ALBINO MOOSE

I heard a tale of the sere trail, I judged its writing
worth,

Told of the shy albino moose now cherished in
the north

That land of lure and spirits sure whose retinues
await,

Entice within their coverts thin, lone evidens to
their fate.

The seasons run from sun to sun, then flood in
fields of snow;

The northland glares in giddy flares then lets the
blizzards go;

Chaotic, dire, red and sapphire, glistened the icy
call;

'Tis said a maid who boldly strayed was crushed
within its pall.

In dazzling sheen the woodlands screen; the frost
like diamonds shone

On rock and leaf, a jewelled thief in vastitude
alone;

It snapped a twang, a mellow tang; the velvet
robed the bark.

The glimmered gold was traced and rolled, fit
carpet for a park.

LEGEND OF THE ALBINO MOOSE

From wigwam's lint through wintry glint forth
went a maid one day,
The ghostly, frosty, shadowy spy leered as she
went her way;
The storm did flush designing hush, winging her
trail to wrong;
To take a tithe from one so blithe it gnashed convulsed and long.

For royal belt with ermined pelt, with beaded
stitch and hook
In rarest hues, graced her sinews; the ambushed
trail she took;
Her flitting feet were light and fleet, she went a
fawn-like bound;
Save where the rack sent records back as yet was
scarce a sound.

The staid spruce roared, they twanged and soared,
the balsams harped dim-eyed,
The pines' great glee was a thing to see, they ogled
far and wide;
And still the mist all strumpet-kissed, haggard and
wanton-lipped,
Came with a shroud all striped and browed; the
storm king's leash it slipped.

LEGEND OF THE ALBINO MOOSE

Then demons shot from no known spot, not
earthen or of air,

And some they sprang with swirling bang, yet
were not here nor there;

While others sped with ghostly tread, then peeked
with fires that gored;

Then earth did fear—despotic fear—the raid of this
mad horde.

The snaky snow, a writhing glow, wormed sheer in
frenzied piles,

The silky coils, the flared turmoils, spouted the
faulty miles;

The plainest trail in broiled travail lost to north's
catapult.

Till each landmark now blurred and stark bent to
the fierce assault.

In milky dun floundered the sun; the vastness
groaned aghast,

And every blow she stamped in snow was smothered
as she passed;

The very mood of the deep wood howled with the
dreadful thing;

The surging thrul for lust stood still, so lithe was
her mild swing.

LEGEND OF THE ALBINO MOOSE

Long on the waste she skipped with haste, still
chaste in mind and limb,
The crafty snares the north's back-stairs she tripped,
a seraphim;
From whipped vortex, the storm's apex, she issued
like a sprite,
And each fond elf with scarf and pelf screened
her confused of night.

The trails erased, all pudding-faced, the storm like
moon-wolves howled,
Its very breath connived with death where earth
was disembowell'd;
But virgin's blood having withstood the shrapnel
of the mire,
Will pulse life's beat, though gnash and heat of
all lust may conspire.

She wandered on, she bounded on and never left a
mark,
The great lone woods enveloped her and it grew
dark and dark;
With soughing reed in oafish greed the cryptic
surf-clouds close,
But stoic hope with nap and mope waltzed com-
pany in the snows.

LEGEND OF THE ALBINO MOOSE

Then at her side the mystery shied in phantoms
of despair,

And sprites still spread their sacred thread to guard
the maiden fair;

She hurried on, there came no dawn, she grew
more elf-like fond,

Till none might see which whirl was she as she
was whisked beyond.

Stray figures bowed, weird marvels cowed, still it
grew dark and dark,

And on each flank the snow-wraiths shrank within
a wond'rous park;

She wandered on, she wandered on and grew more
light and fair,

Till even light no more could blight, so near she
was to air.

The lashed days passed all hulled and massed and
never back came she;

The snow-wreaths reigned all etched and stained
on shrub and rock and tree;

And yet no sign, no word supine, no token frail
she gave,

If in life tossed or death engrossed or bound a
spirit slave.

LEGEND OF THE ALBINO MOOSE

The scragged hills with many rills stood out a
tinted blue,
The frozen palls from water-falls were like a
meshing glue,
And hung in sheen o'er the ditched ravine whither
the blizzard fled,
And yet no where was form so fair, nor could be
claimed the dead.

For human form has willed the worm to change
her carnal guise;
(Who has the mode, who has the code in spirit-
lands franchise)
And wander free in revelry, whatever form or ruse,
In wet or dry, storm or clear sky, to have, or own,
or use.

After the blow in miraged glow, forth went the
braves in search,
Through teasing quag with weary drag they claw-
ed the shrouded birch;
With fallow swing and nervous spring they probed
each secret lair—
Till in a grove of densest wove—when lo! the trail
ends there.

LEGEND OF THE ALBINO MOOSE

With freedom loose out sprang a moose, and each
gasp'd in amaze!

Its form was fair and light as air marked in albino
blaze;

Then each one knew there lurked so true the spirit
of the maid,

So fair and frail who dared the trail and bluffed
the winter's raid.

By many paths, by many straths tremble her
snow-white fawns;

God's favored wards he surely guards until the
fleecy dawns;

By paths untrod except by God they trample in
the hush,

And never yield in hunting-field a spoil to carve
or crush.

No one may loot, no brave may shoot or harm a
sacred hair;

Death's dreadful pangs about him hangs who hunts
—a foul corsair;

In ambushed need and glut and greed her pathway
has respite;

No hunter's grin may claim the skin, both beast
and human sprite.

THE MAN WHO LOST OUT

I've paid a share in a business and a burnished
office space
With the desks, the chairs, the typists and the
telephones in place;
I've grinded my teeth to its building and I've nag-
ged my life to save,
From many acres of wheat ONE HARD to usury I
gave.

Now, none of the big guys know me, no patch on
their togs demeans,
With me in my smock and jumpers, in my soiled
and ragged jeans;
We're not on special speaking terms, and we don't
chum hand in hand;
They seem a trifle shy of me since they screwed
me off my land.

Yet all I've made is in that Block from the brass
upon the doors,
To the polished walls and the glitter, the vault
beneath the floors;
All that I've owned and saved for, all that the
long years have pooled
They've had it safely gathered there since the day
that I was fooled.

THE MAN WHO LOST OUT

I once had a rugged homestead; was happy, diligent, proud,

Though new to the pregnant country, life in my veins twinged and soughed;

So when I was shown by an agent to buy at his advice,

A sample of every product was dumped on me in a trice.

Yes! loaded me with machinery flashy new and big,

And when they found I was easy, they sold me a threshing rig;

With gusto and idle banter they drank me deep in good health,

And then in their maudlin language I waltzed on the trail to wealth.

The contracts were of their wording, they talked me into the same,

(Leastwise the salesman did it, he is out for coin in the game);

They put on the date and payments, the penalty of default,

My farm they took as collateral and hid the deeds in a vault.

THE MAN WHO LOST OUT

The price was too big at the starting, I found this
out to my shame,

The interest, compounded, bled me, the dinners
blackened my name;

I paid on the frightful contract, but then the ex-
penses took,

All the cash that I gave them ere they thrust me
on the hook.

This farming's not all we think it contending with
drouth and frost,

And the weather plans uncertain and the safe rules
all criss-crossed;

Thus, when I fell out on the payments and only
offered part,

The yearly interest took all that and left me worse
than the start.

The staff I kept up was a corker, the blockman on
the fly,

And all of those special agents and collectors buz-
zing by—

(That is, the Company sent them but I and my
neighbors paid

All of their princely wages from the crops that we
grew and made).

THE MAN WHO LOST OUT

And then all those lawyer fellows, wizardy, quiz-
zical, nice,

Breathing their trusty stories, (but serving me
cheap, loaded dice)

They too got their fat pickings; with unctuous
chambers to keep—

Rare exponents of justice in bleeding the goats
with the sheep.

I'm down and out of possessions, my name a by
word for scorn,

And I and my smock and jumpers, baggy and
sloppy and torn,

My wife so shabby and faded, my kiddies pinch
for plain needs—

Then I turn my eyes to yon office, its riotous traf-
fic, its greeds.

You're a great big fancy office, built on the scalp
of toil,

On the heartless sack of homesteads, the rape of
the ravished soil;

You've wung out the bottom dollar, you've probed
to the naked core

That the brass might be more fangled, more tro-
phied the frosted door.

THE MAN WHO LOST OUT

Still, that office looks so cosy, the typists so willow,
neat,

And I that made contributions, a-foot in the dreary
street;

I didn't get it quite figured, all those processes of
law,

Until the day of the auction--the sheriff--dreaming
I saw.

•

You're great big fancy follows but I guess I don't
fit in,

I'm off to the cross-roads and ditches with gnarled
hands and tough skin;

Then ride in your splendid autos, embezzle your
flagrant loot,

Then blackball the ridden farmer, and press his
neck with your boot.

Haste! send out the testy sheriff, distraint on the
farmer's stuff;

The spoils of Cain are your portion, go filch them
till you've enough;

But remember the workman sees you, note that the
farmer knows

The scathing, skilful Shylocks in the pay of his
brazen foes.

THE STORY OF THE GARDEN

As Recited to the H. B. Trader

He was but an uncouth trapper, and his tale a
rambling one,

As he dropped his precious pack upon the floor;
For many leagues he'd pushed his face against the
icy sun;

And now his journey and his strife is o'er.

When pressed about adventures, "I have seen an
awsome sight,

The Garden of the History of man;
And the Chronicle of Genesis, I vouch is nearly
right,

And the Garden's much as the tradition ran."

When chaffed about "bad memory" and his brand
of foggy booze,

He flared up angry like, then meekly stern;
"The Garden? I have seen it, it was mine to win,
then lose;

I have camped amidst its juggling, surgy fern.

THE STORY OF THE GARDEN

"Somewhere in musty regions where no foot hath
trod save mine,

Is a land harmonious and fair;

And no tempest ever buffets a needle of the pine,
But each handiwork of wisdom is there.

"Unadulterated, still the Garden bears its fruit,

All its perfume, the honey and rare wine;

And there's music in the shadows, tingling accent
of lute,

Where fern hath mellow strumming more
divine.

"I was beating, northward driving, wrestling with
a hard pack,

For haunts and trails of elk, the moose and
bear,

To lands where mink and otter sport across the
rugged track,

And the black fox (prince of all furs) doth fare.

"Northward of the Great Slave waters I had watch-
ed the ditch-faced moon

Sheer low above the mottled souging earth;

And the eerie, agile glimmers of the plashy whim
of loon—

Banditti freaks of vastitude and dearth.

THE STORY OF THE GARDEN

"I'd camped beside a river at the close of one cold
day,

And wearily I'd made my camp ablaze;

I'd slumbered in my blankets till my weakness
passed away

Thus I awoke in witchery's deft amaze.

"About was moss most gorgeous in its most as-
tounding fen,

Life abounded in august, festal brake;

And a soft chinook most pleasing purred across
the lazy glen,

And in the lavishness I felt me quake.

"Poled in yawning streamlets where the willing
fishes fought

For privilege of being first to bite;

I hunted in the forests where the mild-eyed jumpers
sought

The gun's range with a rashness shorn of
fright.

"I trapped in magic circles where the richest prizes
fell

To the fierce betraying power of lust;

I trapped, I hunted, feasted in woods of the simple
spell—

No restriction on the trading of trust.

THE STORY OF THE GARDEN

"Flowers grew in trembling sweetness and o'er-
hung in hazy sheen

Every water-course and lakelet in the land;
And no feudal orchard fruitful could compare with
it, I ween,

And I tramped in great elation on the strand.

"Choral birds in gaudy plumage cooed in lodges
of delight,

Or sought my hand as one they long had
known;

Not a mark of foul despoiler made rude the witch-
ing night

In groves where all the mating flocks had
flown.

"Never knew I fear nor langor, all was long en-
chanted dreams,

I looked, I saw, I wandered forth at will;
And my tepee seemed a stronghold moated by a
thousand streams

And I, proud lord, but pleasure to fulfill.

"One morning forth I revelled as the colors sought
the sky,

And heard new sounds unlike the drones of
earth;

'Twas like the fancy strumming of a stringed band
playing nigh,

Convulsed with air waves in a skyey birth.

THE STORY OF THE GARDEN

'Long sat I musing ere I thought who might the
songster be,

And then I peeped 'tween hedges of the pine;
And lo! there sat reproachful where mine eyes
could plainly see,

The fairest maid in all this land of vine!

"And to her sensual lips she touched an instrument
...of reeds

Through which she breathed the happy sylvan
note;

And from my shady cover I perceived with sub-
dued greeds

Pulsate the willowy whiteness of her throat.

"'Twas sight too rare for humans, much too sacred
for mine eyes,

And yet I could not chide my morbid head;
And I feasted for a moment in the softening sur-
prise

As if my soul could never be full fed."

"Wood-nymph or moon-harped fairy?" I exclaimed
in ardent tone,

"Whither, oh whither dost thou waltz or
stray?"

But she shook her tresses archly; like the shrub-
bery wind-blown,

Did the string of yellow roses trail away.

THE STORY OF THE GARDEN

And her frailsome, silky garments clinging to form
so fair,

Hung modest as I reeled in abject truce;
And I wondered if a serpent lurked within a scaly
lair,

With some delirious prompting to traduce.

"Aught of dwelling, hut or boudoir?" I repeated in
daze,

But she pointed to the spray-lipped waterfall
Tipped with changing, seeming substance as the
rainbow's melting haze,

And a foretaste speeded me in replete thrall.

"Then I would approach her nearer but her tink-
ling feet had fled,

Far away I heard the half-hilarious song;
Though I hunted that fair valley with soft mocca-
soned tread

That shy being I could never cross again.

"But a vagrant blindness caught me in the midst
of my foul quest

And for many days I howled, a loathsome
thing;

Then I knew the silky tresses should ne'er glisten
on my breast,

I should never feel those passionate fingers'
cling.

THE STORY OF THE GARDEN

"Every winter I am looking for the Garden trophied there.

It's waiting me, it's calling me up north;
I hear it in the blizzard's din impendent through the air.

I must, I must go forth, go sally forth!"

* * * * *

Did not a blizzard breathing all its rhapsodies of hate,

Snatch from his cabin all his earthly love—
a wife?

A northland story tells he hunted like a panther
for his mate.

But no trace of her was ever found in life.

And his trapping grounds of winter no one ever
yet has found.

No one with his skill and prowess may compete;

Strange! a guarding form—a vision haunts his
quest, his Eden-ground,

Tends and fills his needy traps with trail-free
feet.

A VAGARY OF FISHING SEASON
OR
THE COUNTRY GUY TO THE DUDE

Eere sun has climbed the scrubby hill
And vernal warmth steadies the isle,
If you like fish, then lend your will
And come along and try your guile;
Waylay some beauties with your skill,
Some sumptuous loafers with your wile.

With many tempting wiggling worms
We have procured the fish a treat;
And how each toothsome varmint squirms
Full of a cold, clammy conceit;
("Lo! such an outing," he affirms
"Were never planned with such surfeit!")

For fish bite freshest in the morn,
Here is the landing and the boat;
So with an angler's touch inborn
Let's shove our sturdy craft afloat;
Of every garnishment we're shorn
To row to fishing grounds remote.

A VAGARY OF FISHING SEASON

This place will do? Then anchor now,
And drop your never-ending line;
Just cool your over-fervent brow,
And take care lest your rig entwine;
Now, that's a bite I surely vow—
He's gone! but what's the use to whine!

Another comes! you've hooked him too!
A great black bass in fighting trim!
Just bend a bit in supple thew
And play the gameness out of him!
He's safe! now into it anew,
And cast afar in waters dim!

Some perch—a pickerel follows fast—
Some pike (and then a teasing wait;)
Why, sure! this spot is unsurpassed!
You chuckle, then renew the bait;
You skirmish, dally, then recast,
You smoke in half a dreamy state.

Yes, vainly conscious do you sit
With hope of conquests yet to win;
The plastic fancies wildly flit;
You seem to see great seas of fin
Come nibbling to your magic wit;
And every one must bring his twin!

A VAGARY OF FISHING SEASON

There never has been angler yet
For which fish took such seeming like;
You are so certain you will bet
In casks brimful of perch and pike;
Of course you keep your gargle wet—
A flask's so handy on the dike!

You've lost another? that's too bad!
He must have been a baby whale!
"The best thrill that you ever had?"
Say! this will make a rousing tale!
It sets your senses reeling mad!
You picture it all in detail.

The folk at home will make ado
O'er these cured specimens of pride!
You'll soar amongst the favored few;
You'll on great stooks of honor ride;
You'll give the press an interview—
They'll quote your sayings far and wide!

But now the sun is mounting high,
The Island world is wide awake;
The straggling herds come crowding nigh
To quench their ardor at the lake;
The early witchery now looks wry—
The ferns, the bushes, the deep brake.

A VAGARY OF FISHING SEASON

It's homeward hungry do we swing;
I do not tell you that I caught
The most of all our sealy string;
You did not notice, being wrought;
To tell you now would be a sting,
Discrediting your merry thought.

For I was but the country guy
And you the far-famed city dude;
You paid my price for being by,
So I could scarcely play you rude;
I had my laugh all on the sly
To see your tipsy gestures crude.

* * * * *

All cosy settled at your club,
In banks of fragrant smoke and wine,
And tasting all the dainty grub,
You boast with senses all ashine
(Forget they know you're but a dub)
Of all your skill with hook and line.

"The biggest fish I ever saw
Was one that broke my strongest hook;
He has it still within his craw;"
(No one may doubt his tale to look
Or ask him to withhold his jaw,
Or name the brand he fishing took.)

A VAGARY OF FISHING SEASON

(He did not see the sunken log
That gripped the line so very tight,
Nor know his brain had slipped a cog
When he put up the silly fight;
The fault was really in the grog
That gave his arm the ready might.)

* * * *

It is the truth in all the world,
A little fact none may gainsay,
Where'er the spoon and line are twirled
On any joyful holiday,
The biggest fish you ever whirled
Are always those that get away!

A MEMORY

She came! she came!

Lo! how her freshness seemed to brighten me!
My heart leaped forth responsive to the same;
Awakened instincts how they lighten me!
I seemed to feel in every pleased look
The vivid friendship, and my being shook.

She even came

Much as the bud that quickens over night,
That springs at morning into flowery flame;
And all the trails grew wond'rously so bright;
She with the splash of gold bespangled stood,
And then I knew to live indeed was good.

We wrought along,

Served well our duties as we clung together,
Talked idle things, sung snatches of a song,
Spoke lightly of vain politics, the weather;
And when we fain exchanged our world-flung
views,
It thrilled me to the soul with wild enthuse.

A MEMORY

O, earthly thought!

I asked but one thing in my obtuse mind,
So burdened was I as I delved and wrought

I asked nor got it not or else how blind:
How dense! Did I in my rapt over-zeal
But worry one that really sought my weal?

And then it came

The foreseen parting—and I did endure;
I still went on nor spoke again the name

I found deceitful, once I thought was sure:
I felt forlorn, in every thought distressed,
Lacking that wholesomeness, refining zest.

The tinselled days,

Must pass immutable in buried glow;
I often feel as one that's in a craze,

That's acts—but does not seemingly to know;
Speak not to me again that stinging name,
'Tis not for me voluptuous help to claim.

The stinging pang

Shall raise a quiver in my breast no more—
That fraught-with-comradeship, light, teasing tang
A closed scroll shall it be forever more;

But when the devil views his book of lies,
Methinks I know of some that may arise.

A MEMORY

Away, thou cheat!

No one shall pluck from me that which I hold
That which is mine—a memory—that's past—
Not when my mind aches in its grinding
mould;

I shall not whimper, neither may I rest,
But day by day do valiantly my best.

REVERIE OF THE WALTZ

This is no time for craven fear
Or gloomy, backward faults;
You're out for sport and winsome cheer—
The fond and subtle waltz.

The rousing senses crowd the will
Thus trustingly released;
They surge with that hilarious thrill
And seek the jovial feast.

Slowly the music breaks in tune
And fills the gladsome hall;
Softly speak sparkling lips that swoon—
Scarce answer, yet enthrall.

Artless you soften to the spell
And willingly respond,
As weird, voluptuous, the swell
Riots in space beyond.

You scarcely heed the scene before,
You're wrapped in other thought,
Smoothly revolve upon the floor,
For this your heart is wrought.

REVERIE OF THE WALTZ

What charming touch! unblemished thrill!
You can but feel and gaze;
You do not bend to vulgar will
Delightful, glorious maze!

Oh! rarest of the spotless things
To which we sometimes bow,
The very mood respire, she clings
In wayward tinsel now!

The waxen floor just slips behind,
You seem to glide or float,
Revolving in that step you find
Again reverse, but note;

You seem to tread, you may not know
The motion drops in space;
You wildly breathe, the pulses glow
At such astounding grace.

What the allurements, trifling dream?
How quite unreal but fair
You follow that bewitching stream,
You thread some crystal stair.

Star of the waltz! what limpid eyes!
Matched to such lithesome fire!

REVERIE OF THE WALTZ

When mutual still, reversing ties
Float on in coy desire.

A gayer fragrance rends around
In that resplendent glow,
And sweeter than melodious sound—
We cannot see, but know.

The encircling clasp, touch of the real,
But cloaked in dazzling scene,
Harmonious trust in touch reveal—
Dare not the trust demean.

How near the sacred it respires!
How near the fair divine!
The nerves still flash with tingling fires—
Hark, soul the mood is thine!

O maddening touch! bewildering whirl!
While this love-hunger last,
This is the moment and the girl—
You cannot choose, but cast.

The thread of hope seeks comfort now
To make the perfect blend;
Harmonious still, the steps, the vow,
Rush on the waltz's end.

REVERIE OF THE WALTZ

O charm that still our minds enthuse!

Who dare portray thy faults?

Who would thy merriment refuse,

Thou grand, delirious waltz?

How lightly in the vivid scene

You seem to softly bask;

The dainty graces crown their queen!

Go forth, seek her, and ask!

RHYME OF WILLIE LYNX

A shadow slim as a yeggman's glim
That darts, searches or blinks;
A dapper chap with his tipped ear-lap
As in the brush he sinks;
A phantom wise with his owlish eyes--
That's Mr. Willie Lynx!

And Willie Lynx unlike the sphinx
Was very lean and thin,
With shovel jaws and scythe-like claws--
A shabby unkempt skin,
A ragged mouth like a summer's drouth
And a whiskered, ghostly grin.

Foot-falls as soft as a star pegged aloft
As the fay morn it drinks;
A coquette cute in her fine spring suit
As she fawns, gestures or winks;
So soulful, wise, with her hot green eyes--
That's Mrs. Willie Lynx!

RHYME OF WILLIE LYNX

Yet Willie Lynx had the mind of a sphinx
In his sequestered fen;

'Twas near this lair with his lady fair
He built a cosy den;

But Willie had one cautious fad--
The fear of dogs and men.

About them lay in the sunny day
Their lusty nest of kits;

And every one was full of fun--
Such fussy little chits!

Their romping noise and queer decoys
Threw Willie into fits.

'Tis fair that Willie could not bear
To see them skip and jump;

He tried to sleep but they would creep
And scratch or shake and bump.

Till in a whirl would Willie skirl
And chase them up a stump.

For Willie true was just like you,
So easy to provoke,

When little boys make such a noise
And into mischief poke;

He most did rue his helpmate true
And roving kitten folk.

RHYME OF WILLIE LYNX

But hungry kits must have tid-bits
Of squirrel and rabbit meat;
By nature shy would tease and cry
For something more to eat;
And Willie knew a fresh lamb stew
Would be a relished treat.

He let a squall, a caterwaul,
To give his courage flush;
The echoed wail beside the trail
Made Willie sulk and blush;
The timid streak left him so weak
He vanished in the brush.

He was so cross, he dug the moss
And kicked up such a row,
He snapped his teeth within their sheath
With such a puckered brow,
The rabbit tribes with hurried strides
Sought their retreats, I vow.

Now Willie free sat on a tree
His wife sat by his side,
And he wished that he were as good as she
Fresh dinners to provide;
For Willie Lynx (unlike the sphinx)
Thought of his gaunt inside.

RHYME OF WILLIE LYNX

Then sought the hunt with stealthy stunt
And lounged beside a hole;

He sought a pool in timbers cool
To fish—no line or pole;

How seldom still he knew the pill—
Hard work—would save his soul.

'Twas on a log in a tamarack bog
One fine day Willie stalked;

He craved for meat that he might eat—
When lo! before him walked

A striped beast to make a feast—
'Twere better he had balked.

He bared his claws and swivel jaws
With power almost drunk;

He made a scoop, he looped the loop,
And then did Willie flunk—

No bones to pick, no chops to lick,—
It was a common skunk.

(The lynx set are acute you bet,

They have their every whim,

A shuffling world in which they're whirled,

Their likes and dislikes prim—

A wily pride and they swing it wide,

They keep their suiting trim.)

RHYME OF WILLIE LYNX

He hides his face, he's in disgrace,
The family made him pack;
He is the talk of the tribal walk,
The lynxes think him slack;
Each screws his nose at Willie's pose
And turns on him his back.

He is a dub and he must scrub
To loosen up the scent;
He is a bat, a crazy cat,
A silly, slothful gent;
He yet may learn all in his turn
To be a bit lucent.

Perhaps some day not far away
They may let him return,
If he behaves and pardon craves
And promises to learn
In all his stalks and hunts or walks,
To use some sane concern.

DESTINY

When Destiny's astounding wiles
Allure the inclines of the heart,
How good that Honor's sterner smiles
Still hold us to the nobler part.

To see a vision of the dell—
A vision! yet how real to be—
To picture all, as in a spell,
Just as it seemed to feel to be.

To tell of love, of Virtue's face,
Of Nature's splendors; everything
That helps uplift the human race—
That good in life to which we cling.

To think of scenes we ne'er may see,
Of Beauty—cease a heart thy pangs!
On that blest soil yet ne'er to be,
When o'er such mood one dark beam hangs.

To picture with an aching pen
A possibility—how small!
That coming to oneself again,
To find an Eden with a fall!

DESTINY

To hunger till the senses ache
For just that one forbidden taste
That to surmise, but cannot take—
(E'en though that choicest touch may waste.)

Just but a token, one scant word!
One little easing of the heart!
Thus fondly rest e'en to be stirred—
An ideal yet, if but to part.

How dark the waiting, scant the kiss,
How fogged the blight that takes its toll;
To strive, to brave—surmount all this
To live and vindicate the soul.

For each one purpose to fulfil,
For each a Marathon to run;
And when that triumph of the will—
A greater Destiny's begun.

A SONG OF REGRET

The face still seeming near,
 'Twere better to ignore;
A voice I'd love to hear,
 Yet I may seek no more.

A name I once did reach
 Shall wither on my tongue;
The words make listless speech—
 Best sealed, since trust is stung.

The trust I once did give
 Hath turned to bitter gall;
'Twere saner to outlive
 Than be irrational.

Give to the thieves their due,
 For memory slowly dies;
The truest friends are few
 When trust's estranged by lies;

Unskilled to witching song
 Is unbeseeming vow;

A SONG OF REGRET

Too short, and yet so long
Am I regretful now.

A face still seeming near
'Twere better to forget;
A voice I'd love to hear—
I seem to hear it yet.

UNTHOUGHTFULNESS

How often do our careless lips
Pronounce the cheerless word;
Our lives are full of canting slips
Of good denied, deferred;
We might great deeds of kindness wrought,
Had we but thought, had we but thought.

How often do our acts seem rude
Or jar another's sense;
How often do the eyes bedewed
Recall our negligence;
Those little things sorrow has taught,
Brings us to mind, we never thought.

The chance we had to press the hand
Or quench the testy tear,
We left, as if to juggle sand,
And passed on cold and sere;
Till coming home with burning freight,
Recalls that ceaseless never thought.

UNTHOUGHTFULNESS

There was a time we toiled amain
A post to reach or keep;
But as we came afar, we fain
Would stop to think or sleep;
To reach the topmost stand we sought,
We lost it by one, never thought.

SOWING

'Tis better in this world of pains
To sow a few life-giving grains
Of love and virtue all along,
Than take a world or city strong;
They may choke out some rusty stains,
And raise a soul to speech and song.

Then when the numbered days shall roll
Across that once unwary soul,
We'll bless the Lord of Harvest-Time,
And thank him for His Love Divine
That saved it from the tempter's scroll,
And set it in the broad sunshine.

Toil on, rake on, gather and weep;
Sow we the seed, but God will reap!

BEAUTY

If beauty of person were fragrance of mind,
A forbearing world might we everything find,
Where vice, sin, or coldness could scarcely agree.
And bid loud defiance while flourishing free.

Ah! Beauty of person! at thee would we grasp;
But beauty of mind is the best, and will last
Till the wavering steps mark the progress of age,
And the furrowed brow's shine as words of the
sage.

But beauty of person not all may possess,
Yet the mind keep embellished, toned in love's
press;
To cultivate daily this token of grace
Will make the world take of a heavenly place.

And true worth then shall have her proper estate,
With beauty acknowledged as only a trait.

SEEKING

• Out of the frigid, squalid throng
I came with my maudlin dross to her;
My tongue was parched and had no song
But she drew me with my cross to her.

My sores were cooled in mountain dew—
What compares with the name of her?
Revigored I felt in bone and th ,
• And I felt me strong in the flame of her.

Now I know the faith that curbed me fair
Came from the heart so warm of her;
Infused, I gulped the wholesome air
Filled with the potent charm of her.

A GOAL

Oh! for the knack of speech!

A boon to gain!

What strife to stem to reach,

And strawed with pain!

A ladder broken, frayed,

The feet must test,

With falls checkered, dismayed—

Before the rest.

With every move to rise,

A baffling blow;

Even at times the skies

Deluge the snow.

For sorrow sullen, deep,

Preludes each sweet;

Anguish and broken sleep

For trail-torn feet.

The ideal beckons; Haste!

Dost wherefore drift?

Why shuffle, longer waste?

The cross uplift!

Life's Dardanelles are passed,

The seamless war;

Lo! in the East at last,

The Blazing Star!

PARTED

Return to your cowslip meadows
And I will take the ridge;
A gulf there is fixed between us—
A gulf that we may not bridge.

Your path is flower-sprinkled
And mine is pricked with hate;
Leave me for your luscious bowers—
Leave me to my course serrate.

We clasp across the fastness
The fluttered last 'good-bye.'
But never a trembled token,
Nor the strangle of a sigh.

Then haste to your ruby bowers—
I take the pebbly ridge;
You have fixed the gulf between us—
I do not ask to bridge.

AN END OF RAIL

I want no costly, blazoned rites
Paid for me at my end of rail;
Just a nook in some ragged heights
Near the tramp of some tardy trail.

Where coyotes to the jewelled sky
Mouth their woes in a pitching tone,
Or the honk of wild geese phalanxed high
Find no re-echo but their own.

Far from life's blandishments to be
When I claim my allotted sod;
There in shy nature would I see
A sure embodiment of God.

No long words of a garnished tongue
Ever would suit my flesh and bones;
P'le me a loving mound unsung—
A rustic mound of nature's stones.

